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A HISTORY OF CRITICISM

AND LITERARY TASTE

Ignorantium temeraria plerumque sunt judicia.

—POLYCARP LEYSER.

A HISTORY OF CRITICISM

AND

LITERARY TASTE IN EUROPE

FROM THE EARLIEST TEXTS TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

CLASSICAL AND MEDIÆVAL CRITICISM

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PREFACE.

It is perhaps vain to attempt to tone down the audacity of the present essay by any explanations or limitations; it is certain that those who are offended by it at first blush are very unlikely to be propitiated by excuses of the faults which, excusably or inexcusably, it no doubt contains. The genesis of it is as follows. When, not much less than thirty years ago, the writer was first asked to undertake the duty of a critic, he had naturally to overhaul his own acquaintance with the theory and practice of criticism, and to inquire what was the acquaintance of others therewith. The disconcerting smallness of the first was a little compensated by the discovery that very few persons seemed to be much better furnished. Dr Johnson's projected "History of Criticism, as it relates to Judging of Authours" no doubt has had fellows in the great library of books unwritten. But there were then, and I believe there are still, only two actual attempts to deal with the whole subject. One of these[1] I have never seen, and indeed had

[1] Della Critica, Libri Tre. B. Mazzarella, Genova, 1866. The book to which I owe my knowledge of this, Professors Gayley and Scott's *Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism*, Boston, U.S.A., 1899, is invaluable as a bibliography, and has much more than merely bibliographical interest.

never heard of till nearly the whole of the present volume was written. Moreover, it seems to be merely a torso. The other, Théry's *Histoire des Opinions Littéraires*,[1] a book which, after two editions at some interval, has been long out of print, is a work of great liveliness, no small knowledge, and, in its airy French kind, a good deal of acuteness. But the way in which "Critique Arabe," "Critique Juive," &c., are knocked off in a page or a paragraph at one end, and the way in which, at the other—though the second edition was published when Mr Arnold was just going to write, and the first when Coleridge, and Hazlitt, and Lamb had already written—the historian knows of nothing English later than Campbell and Blair, are things a little disquieting. At any rate, neither of these was then known to me, and I had, year by year, to pick up for myself, and piece together, the greater and lesser classics of the subject in a haphazard and groping fashion.

This volume—which will, fortune permitting, be followed by a second dealing with the matter from the Renaissance to the death of eighteenth-century Classicism, and by a third on Modern Criticism—is an attempt to supply for others, on the basis of these years of reading, the Atlas of which the writer himself so sorely felt the need. He may have put elephants for towns, he may have neglected important rivers and mountains, like a general from the point of view of a newspaper correspondent, or a newspaper correspondent from the point of view of a general; but he has done what he could.

The book, the plan of which was accepted by my publishers some five or six years ago, before I was appointed to the Chair which I have the honour to hold, has been delayed in its com-

[1] Ed. 2, Paris, 1849. The first edition may have appeared between 1830 and 1840. Vapereau says 1844, which would strengthen my point in the text; but this does not seem to agree with the Preface of the second.

position, partly by work previously undertaken, partly by professional duties. But it has probably not been injured by the necessity of reading, for these duties, some four or five times over again, the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*, the *Institutes* and the Περὶ Ὕψους, the *De Vulgari Eloquio* and the *Discoveries*, the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*.

I do not know whether some apology may be expected from a man whom readers, if they know him at all, are likely to know only as a student of modern literature, for the presumption of making his own translations from Greek and Latin. But when one has learnt these languages for twelve or fifteen years, taught them for eight more, and read them for nearly another five-and-twenty, it seems rather pusillanimous to take cover behind "cribs." I have aimed throughout rather at closeness than at elegance. An apology of another kind may be offered for the biographical and lexicographical details which, at the cost of some trouble, have been incorporated in the Index. Everybody has not a classical dictionary at hand, and probably few people have a full rhetorical lexicon. Yet it was inevitable, in a book of this kind, that a large number of persons, books, and words should be introduced, as to the date, the contents, the meaning of which or of whom, the ordinary reader might require some enlightenment. Information of the sort would have made the text indigestible and have overballasted the notes; so I have put it in the Index, where those who do not want it need not seek it, and where those who seek will, I hope, find.

It only remains to thank, with a heartiness not easily to be expressed, the friends who have been good enough to read my proofs and to give me the benefit of their special knowledge. Not always does the restless explorer of literature at large who, knowing that here also "the merry world is round And

[he] may sail for evermore," elects to be a world-wanderer, receive, from the legitimate authorities of the ports into which he puts, a genuine welcome, cheerful victualling, and assistance in visiting the adjacent provinces. Sometimes they fire into him, sometimes they deny him food and water, often they look upon him as a filibuster, or an interloper, or presumptuous. But Professor Butcher, Professor Hardie, and Professor Ker, who have had the exceeding kindness to read each the portion of this volume which belongs to him more specially of right, have not only given me invaluable suggestions and corrections, but have even encouraged me to hope that my treatment, however far it may fall short of what is desirable, is not grossly and impudently inadequate. May all other competent persons be equally lenient!

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

EDINBURGH, *Lammastide* 1900.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

Since this book was first printed, I have remembered that the story about Malatesta and the bones (note, p. 124) is told by Mr Symonds in more than one place (*e.g.*, *The Revival of Learning*, new ed., p. 151) of *Gemistus* Pletho, the well-known Grecian and Platonist, whose appearance in Italy so much excited Humanism. This is, for many reasons, much more probable; but the mistake of "Themistius," if mistake it be, is not mine but Dindorf's, or rather that of Keyssler, from whom Dindorf quotes an account of the matter, and an apparently literal transcript of the inscription. Some minor emendations have been made in this edition, but it has been thought better to place the major corrections of fact and explanations of meaning in the second volume, in order that all possessors of the book may be equally furnished with these.

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BOOK I

GREEK CRITICISM

ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστι πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγέννημα.

—LONGINUS

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

DELIMITATION OF FRONTIER—CLASSES OF CRITICISM EXCLUDED—CLASS RETAINED—METHOD—TEXTS THE CHIEF OBJECT—"HYPOTHESES NON FINGO"—ILLUSTRATION FROM M. EGGER—THE DOCUMENTS—GREEK—ROMAN—MEDIÆVAL—RENAISSANCE AND MODERN.

IT is perhaps always desirable that the readers of a book should have a clear idea of what the writer of it proposes to give them: it is very certainly desirable that such an idea should exist in the writer himself. But if this is the case generally, it must be more especially the case where there is at least some considerable danger of ambiguity. And that there is such danger, in regard to the title of the present book, not many persons, I suppose, would think of denying. The word Criticism is often used, not merely with the laxity common to all such terms, but in senses which are not so much extensions of each other as digressions into entirely different *genera*. In the following pages it will be used as nearly as possible univocally. The Criticism which will be dealt with here is that function of the judgment which busies itself with the goodness or badness, the success or ill-success, of literature from the purely literary point of view. Other offices of the critic, real or so-called, will occupy us slightly or not at all. We shall meddle little with the more transcendental Æsthetic, with those ambitious theories of Beauty, and of artistic Pleasure in general, which, fascinating and noble as they appear, have too often proved cloud-Junos. The business of interpretation, a most valuable and legitimate side-work of his, though perhaps only a

Delimitation of frontier.

side-work, will have to be glanced at, as we come to modern times, with increasing frequency. We shall not be able entirely to leave out of the question, though we shall not greatly trouble ourselves with it, what is called the "verbal" part of his office—the authentication or extrusion of this or that "reading." But we shall, as far as possible, neglect and decline what may perhaps best be called the Art of Critical Coscinomancy, by which the critic affects to discern, separate, and rearrange, on internal evidence not of a literary character, the authorship and date of books. Of the Criticism, so-called, which has performed its chief exploits in Biblical discussion, which has meddled a good deal with the Classics, and which occupies, in regard to the older and therefore more tempting documents of modern literature, a position of activity midway between that exercised towards the sacred writings and that exercised towards Greek and Roman authors, no word will, except by some accidental necessity, be found in these pages. The rules and canons of this Criticism are different from, and in most cases antagonistic to, those of Criticism proper: its objects are entirely distinct; and in particular it, for the most part if not wholly, neglects the laws of Logic. Now Criticism proper, which is but in part a limitation, in part an extension, of Rhetoric, never parts company with Rhetoric's elder sister.

Classes of Criticism excluded.

In other words, the Criticism or modified Rhetoric, of which this book attempts to give a history, is pretty much the same thing as the reasoned exercise of Literary Taste—the attempt, by examination of literature, to find out what it is that makes literature pleasant, and therefore good—the discovery, classification, and as far as possible tracing to their sources, of the qualities of poetry and prose, of style and metre, the classification of literary kinds, the examination and "proving," as arms are proved, of literary means and weapons, not neglecting the observation of literary fashions and the like. It will follow from this that the History must pursue the humble *a posteriori* method. Except on the rarest occasions, when it may be safe to generalise, it will confine itself wholly to the particular and the actual. We shall not busy ourselves with what men ought to have admired, what

Class retained.

Method.

they ought to have written, what they ought to have thought, but with what they did think, write, admire. To some, no doubt, this will give an appearance of plodding, if not of pusillanimity; but there may be others who will recognise in it, not so much a great refusal, as an honest attempt to provide some sound and useful knowledge which does not exist in any accessible form, — to raise, by whatsoever humble drudgery, vantage-points from which more aspiring persons than the writer may take Pisgah-sights, if they please, without fear of their support collapsing under them in the manner of a tub.

Texts the chief object.

It has further seemed desirable, if not absolutely necessary for the carrying out of this scheme, to confine ourselves mainly to the actual texts. This is not, perhaps, a fashionable proceeding. Not what Plato says, but what the latest commentator says about Plato—not what Chaucer says, but what the latest thesis-writer thinks about Chaucer—is supposed to be the qualifying study of the scholar. I am not able to share this conception of scholarship. When we have read and digested the whole of Plato, we may, if we like, turn to his latest German editor; when we have read and digested the whole of Shakespeare, and of Shakespeare's contemporaries, we may, if we like, turn to Shakespearian biographers and commentators. But this extension of inquiry, to apply a famous contrast, is facultative, not necessary. At any rate, in the following pages it is proposed to set forth, and where necessary to discuss, what Plato, Aristotle, Dionysius, Longinus, what Cicero and Quintilian, what Dante and Dryden, what Corneille and Coleridge, with many a lesser man besides, have said about literature, noticing by the way what effect these authorities have had on the general judgment, and what, as often happens, the general judgment has for the time made up its mind to, without troubling itself about authorities. But we shall only occasionally busy ourselves with what others, not themselves critically great, have said about these great critics, and that from no arrogance, but for two reasons of the most inoffensive character. In the first place, there is no room to handle both text and margent, with the margent's margent *ad infinitum*. In the second, the handling

of the margent would distinctly obscure the orderly setting forth of the texts.

"Hypotheses non fingo."

Yet, further, leave will be taken to neglect guesswork as far as possible, and for the most part, if not invariably, to refrain from building any hypotheses upon titles, casual citations, or mere probabilities.

To illustrate what is meant, let us take a book which every one who makes such an attempt as this must mention with the utmost gratitude and respect, the admirable *Essai sur l'Histoire de la Critique chez les Grecs*[1] of the late M. Egger. That excellent scholar and most agreeable writer was perhaps as free from "hariolation" as any one who has ever dealt with classical subjects; yet the first ninety pages of his book are practically in the air. The judges of rhapsodical competitions were the first critics; the Homeric edition of Pisistratus presupposes and implies criticism, which is equally —which is even more—presupposed and implied in the choragic system of Athens, whereby plots were chosen for performance; there are known to have been successive and corrected versions of plays, from which the same conclusions may be drawn. We are told, and can readily believe, that the actors had their parts suited to them, and this means criticism. Nay, was not the whole Comedy, the Old Comedy at least, a criticism, and often a purely literary one? Is not the *Frogs*, in particular, a dramatised "review" of the most slashing kind? And have we not even the titles, at least, of regular treatises, presumably critical, by Pratinas, by Lasus, by the great Sophocles himself?

Illustration from M. Egger.

Now all this is probable; nearly all of it is interesting, and some of it is, so far as it goes, certain. But then as a certainty it goes such a very little way! M. Egger himself, with the frankness which the scholar ought to have, but has not always, admits the justice of the reproach of one of his critics, that part of it is conjecture. It would scarcely be harsh to say that all of it is, in so far as any solid information as to the critical habits of the Greeks is furnished by it. In the pages that follow at least a steady effort will be made to discard the conjectural

[1] Paris. Third Edition, 1887.

altogether, and to reduce even the amount of superstructure on second-hand foundations to the minimum. The existant written word, as it is the sole basis of all sound criticism in regard to particulars, so it is the only sound basis for the history of Criticism in general. The enormous losses which we have suffered in this department of Greek literature, and the scanty supply which, except in the department of the Lower Rhetoric, seems to be all that existed in Latin, may appear to make the effort to conduct inquiry in this way a rash or a barren one; but the present writer at least is convinced that no effort can usefully be made in any other. And after all, though so much is lost, much remains. In point of tendency we can ask for nothing better than Plato, provoking and elusive as he may seem in individual utterances; in point of particular expression and indication of general lines, the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* of Aristotle are admittedly priceless; and such writers as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as Plutarch, as Dion Chrysostom, as Lucian, and above all as Longinus, leave us very little reason to complain, even when we turn from the comparative scantiness of this *corpus* to the comparative wealth of arid rhetorical term-splitting which still remains to us.

The Documents.

Greek.

Nor is it at all probable that if we had more Latin literary criticism we should be so very much better off. For, once more, the existing work of such men as Cicero, Quintilian, Tacitus, and above all Horace, with the literary allusions of the later satirists, not to mention for the present the gossip of Aulus Gellius and the like, gives more than sufficient "tell-tales." We can see the nature and the limitations of Roman criticism in these as well as if they filled a library.

Roman.

In the great stretch of time—some thousand years—between the decadence of the pure Classics and the appearance of the Renaissance it is not the loss but the absence of material that is the inconvenience, and this inconvenience is again tolerable. The opinions of the Dark and Early Middle Ages on the Classics themselves are only a curiosity; for real criticism or matured judgment on existing work

Mediæval.

in the vernacular they had little opportunity even in a single language, for comparative work still less. Only the astonishing and strangely undervalued tractate of Dante remains to show us what might have been done; the rest is curious merely.

Renaissance and Modern.

But the Renaissance has no sooner come than our difficulties assume a different form, and increase as we approach our own times. It is now not deficiency but superabundance of material that besets us; and if this work reaches its second volume, a rigid process of selection and of representative treatment will become necessary.

But in this first the problem is how to extract from comparatively, though not positively, scanty material a history that, without calling in guesswork to its assistance, shall present a fairly adequate account of the Higher Rhetoric and Poetic, the theory and practice of Literary Criticism and Taste, during ancient and during mediæval times. At intervals the narrative and examination will be interrupted for the purpose of giving summaries of a kind necessarily more temerarious and experimental than the body of the book, but even here no attempt will be made at hasty generalisation. Where the path has been so little trodden, the loyal road-layer will content himself with making it straight and firm, with fencing it from precipices, and ballasting it across morasses as well as he can, leaving others to stroll off on side-tracks to agreeable view-points, and to thread loops of cunning expatiation.

In conclusion, with special regard to this Book and the next, I would, very modestly but very strenuously, deprecate a line of comment which is not unusual from exclusively classical students, and which stigmatises "judging ancient literature from modern points of view." Such a process is no doubt even more grossly wrong than that (not unknown) of judging modern literature from ancient standpoints. But the true critic admits neither. He endeavours—a hard and ambitious task!—to extract from *all* literature, ancient, mediæval, and modern, lessons of its universal qualities, which may enable him to see each period *sub specie æternitatis*. And nothing less than this—with the Muses to help—is the adventure of this work.

CHAPTER II.

GREEK CRITICISM BEFORE ARISTOTLE.

EARLIEST CRITICISM OF THE GREEKS—PROBABLY HOMERIC IN SUBJECT—PROBABLY ALLEGORIC IN METHOD — XENOPHANES — PARMENIDES—EMPEDOCLES—DEMOCRITUS—THE SOPHISTS: EARLIER—THE SOPHISTS: LATER—PLATO—HIS CROTCHETS—HIS COMPENSATIONS—ARISTOPHANES—THE 'FROGS'—OTHER CRITICISM IN COMEDY—SIMYLUS (?)—ISOCRATES.

ALTHOUGH we have, putting aside Aristophanes, an almost utter dearth of actual texts before Plato, it is possible, without violating the principles laid down in the foregoing chapter, to discern some general currents, and a few individual deliverances, of Greek criticism[1] in earlier ages. The earliest character of this criticism that we perceive is, as we should expect, a tendency towards allegorical explanations of literature. And the earliest subject of this that we discover is, again as we should expect, the work attributed to Homer.

Earliest criticism of the Greeks.

If we had older and more certain testimony about the fact, and still more about the exact character, of the world-famous Pisistratean redaction of the Homeric and other poems, it would be necessary to reverse the order of this statement; and even as it is, the utmost criti-

Probably Homeric in subject.

[1] I am not aware of any *complete* treatment of the subject of Greek criticism except that of M. Egger already cited, and, as part of a still larger whole, that of M. Théry (see note on Preface). The German handlings of the subject, as Professor Rhys Roberts (p. 259 of his ed. of Longinus) remarks, seem all to be concerned with the philosophy of æsthetic. If the work which Professor Roberts himself promises (ibid., p. ix.) had appeared, I should doubtless have had a most valuable guide and controller in him.

cal caution may admit that it was probably with Homer that Greek criticism began. We shall find nothing so constantly borne out in the whole course of this history as the fact—self-evident, but constantly neglected in its consequences—that criticism is a vine which must have its elm or other support to fasten on. And putting aside all the endless and (from some points of view at least) rather fruitless disputes about the age, the authorship, and so forth, of Homer, we know, from what is practically the unanimous and unintentional testimony of the whole of Greek literature, that "Homer" and the knowledge of Homer were anterior to almost all of it. And it was impossible that a people so acute and so philosophically given as the Greeks should be soaked in Homer, almost to the same extent as that to which the English lower and middle classes of the seventeenth century were soaked in the Bible, without being tempted to exercise their critical faculties upon the poems. It was long, as we shall see, before this exercise took the form of strictly literary criticism, of the criticism which (with the provisos and limitations of the last chapter) we call æsthetic. It was once said that the three functions of criticism in its widest sense are to interpret, to verify or sanction, and to judge, the last being its highest and purest office. But the other two commend themselves perhaps more to the natural man — they certainly commended themselves more to the Greeks—and we should expect to find them, as we do find them, earlier practised. The Pisistratean redaction, if a fact (as in some form or other it pretty certainly was), is an enterprise both bold and early in the one direction; there is no reason to doubt that many enterprises were made pretty early in the other; and not much to doubt that most of these experiments in interpretation took the allegorical form.

Probably allegoric in method.

Modern readers and modern critics have usually a certain dislike to Allegory, at least when she presents herself honestly and by her own name. Her government has no doubt at times been something despotic, and her votaries and partisans have at times been almost intolerably tedious and absurd. Yet in the finer sorts of literature, at any rate, the apprehension of some

sort of allegory, of some sort of double meaning, is almost a necessity. The student of any kind of poetry, and the student of the more imaginative prose, can never rest satisfied with the mere literal and grammatical sense, which belongs not to literature but to science. He cannot help seeking some hidden meaning, something further, something behind, if it be only rhythmical beauty, only the suggestion of pleasure to the ear and eye and heart. Nor ought he to help it. But the ill repute of Allegory arises from the ease with which her aid is borrowed to foist religious, philosophical, and other sermons into the paradise of art. This danger was especially imminent in a country like Greece, where religion, philosophy, literature, and art of all kinds were, from the earliest times, almost inextricably connected and blended.

Accordingly allegory, and that reverse or seamy side of allegory, rationalistic interpretation, seem to have made their appearance very early in Greece. This latter has only to do with literary criticism in the sense that it is, and always has been, a very great degrader thereof, inclining it to be busy with matter instead of form. The allegorising tendency proper is not quite so dangerous, though still dangerous enough. But in the second-hand and all too scanty notices that we have of the early philosophers, it is evident that the two tendencies met and crossed in them almost bewilderingly. When Xenophanes found fault with the Homeric anthropomorphism, when Anaxagoras and others made the scarcely audacious identification of the arrows of Apollo with the rays of the sun, and the bolder one of Penelope's web with the processes of the syllogism, they were anticipating a great deal which has presented itself as criticism (whether it had any business to do so or not) in the last two thousand and odd hundred years. We have not a few names, given by more or less good authority and less or more known independently, of persons—Anaximander, Stesimbrotus, a certain Glaucus or Glaucon, and others—who early devoted themselves to allegorical interpretation of Homer and perhaps of other poets; but we have hardly even fragments of their work, and we can found no solid arguments upon what is told us of it. Only we can see dimly from these notices, clearly from the

fuller and now trustworthy evidence which we find in Plato, that their criticism was criticism of matter only,—that they treated Homer as a historical, a religious, a philosophical document, not as a work of art.

Indeed, as one turns over the volumes of Karsten[1] and Mullach[2] with their budgets of commentary and scholia enveloping the scanty kernel of text; as one reads the relics, so interesting, so tantalising, so pathetic, of these early thinkers who already knew of metaphysics *ce qu'on a su de tous les temps*,—one sees, scanty as they are, how very unlikely it is that, if we had more, there would be anything in it that would serve our present purpose. These Greeks, at any rate, *were* children—children of genius, children of extraordinary promise, children almost of that gigantic breed which has to be stifled lest it grow too fast. But, like children in general, when they have any great mental development, they scorned what seemed to them little things. And, also like children, they had not and could not have the accumulation of knowledge of particulars which is necessary for the criticism of art. The audacious monopantheism of Xenophanes could not, we are sure, have stooped to consider, not as it actually did[3] whether Homer and Hesiod were blasphemers, but whether they did their blaspheming with technical cunning. In its sublimer moments and in its moments of discussion, in those of the famous single line—

Xenophanes.

οὖλος ὁρᾷ, οὖλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὖλος δέ τ' ἀκούει,

as well as in the satire on the ox- and lion-creed of lions and oxen, it would have equally scorned the attempt to substitute for mere opinion a humble inductive approach to knowledge on the differences of Poetry and prose and the proper definition of Comedy. Even in those milder moods when the philosopher gave, if he did give, receipts for the proper mode of mixing

[1] *Philosophorum Græcorum Veterum Reliquiæ. Rec. et ill. Simon Karsten* (Amsterdam, 1830-38). Vol. i. pars 1, Xenophanes; vol. i. pars 2, Parmenides; vol. ii. Empedocles.

[2] *Democriti Abderitæ Operum Fragmenta. Coll., &c., F. G. A. Mullachius* (Berlin, 1843).

[3] Karsten, i. 1. 43. Fr. 7.

negus,[1] and was not insensible to the charms of a soft couch, sweet wine, and devilled peas,[2] one somehow does not see him as a critic.

How much less even does one see anything of the kind in the few and great verses of Parmenides, that extraordinary link of union between Homer and Lucretius, the poet of the "gates of the ways of night and day,"[3] the philosopher whose teaching is of that which "is and cannot but be?"[4] the seer whose sight was ever "straining straight at the rays of the sun"?[5] We shall see shortly how a more chastened and experienced idealism, combined in all probability with a much wider actual knowledge of literature and art, made the literary criticism of Plato a blend of exquisite rhapsody and childish crotchet. In the much earlier day of Parmenides not even this blend was to be expected. There could hardly by any possibility have been anything but the indulgence in allegorising which is equally dear to poets and philosophers, and perhaps the inception of a fanciful philology. Metaphysics and physics sufficed, with a little creative literature. For criticism there could be no room.

Parmenides.

But it will be said, Empedocles? Empedocles who, according to some traditions, was the inventor of Rhetoric—who certainly was a native of the island where Rhetoric arose—the chief speaker among these old philosophers? That Empedocles had a good deal of the critical temper may be readily granted. He has little or nothing of the sublime beliefs of Parmenides; his scepticism is much more thoroughgoing than that which certainly does appear in the philosopher of Colophon. If a man do not take the discouragement of it too much to heart there is, perhaps, no safer and saner frame of mind for the critic than that expressed in the strongest of all the Empedoclean fragments, that which tells us how "Men, wrestling through a little space of life that is no life, whirled

Empedocles.

[1] Ibid., i. 1. 77. Fr. 23. Xenophanes is emphatic on the necessity of putting the water in *first*.

[2] Ibid., i. 1. 55. Fr. 17. The philosopher says merely ἐρεβίνθους, but we know from Pherecrates (*ap. Athenæum*, ii. 44) that they were parched or devilled, πεφρυγμένους.

[3] Parm. *de Natura*, l. 11; Karsten, I. ii. 29.

[4] Ibid., l. 35.

[5] Ibid., l. 144.

off like a vapour by quick fate, flit away, each persuaded but of that with which he has himself come in contact, darting this way and that. But the Whole man boasts to find idly; not to be seen are these things by men, nor heard, nor grasped by their minds. Thou shalt know no more than human counsel has reached."[1] An excellent critical mood, if not pushed to mere inaction and despair: but there is no evidence that it led Empedocles to criticism. Physics and ethics appear to have absorbed him wholly.

That the sophist was the first rhetorician would be allowed by his accusers as well as by his apologists: and though Rhetoric long followed wandering fires before it recognised its true star and became Literary Criticism, yet nobody doubts that we must look to it for what literary criticism we shall find in these times. The Sophists, on the very face of the charge constantly brought against them of attending to words merely, are almost acknowledged to be the inventors of Grammar; while from the other charge that they corrupted youth by teaching them to talk fluently, to make the worse the better reason, and the like, it will equally follow that they practised the deliberate consideration of style. Grammar is only the *ancilla* of criticism, but a tolerably indispensable one; the consideration of style is at least half of criticism itself. Accordingly the two first persons in whose work (if we had it) we might expect to find a considerable body of literary criticism, if only literary criticism of a scrappy, tentative, and outside kind, are the two great sophists Gorgias and Protagoras, contemporaries, but representatives of almost the two extremities of the little Greek world, of Leontini and Abdera, of Sicily and Thrace.

We have indeed a whole catalogue of work that should have been critical or nothing ascribed by Diogenes Laertius[2] to the still greater contemporary and compatriot of Protagoras, Democritus. How happily would the days of Thalaba (supposing Thalaba to be a historian of criticism) go by, if he had that little library of works which Diogenes thus assigns and calls "Of *Music*"! They are eight in number: "On Rhythm and Harmony," "On

[1] Emp. *de Natura*, l. 34-40; Karsten, ii. 89, 90.

[2] Diog. Laert., ix. 7, p. 239 ed. Cobet (Didot Collection).

Poetry" (one would compound for this alone), "On the Beauty of Words,"[1] "On Well- and Ill-sounding Letters," "On Homer or Right Style and Glosses,"[2] "On the Aoedic Art," "On Verbs (?),"[3] and an *Onomasticon*. But Democritus lived in the fifth century before Christ, and Diogenes in the second century after Christ; the historian's attribution is unsupported, and he has no great character for accuracy; while, worst of all, he himself tells us that there were six Democriti, and that of the other five one was a musician, another an epigrammatist, and a third (most suspiciously) a technical writer on rhetoric. It stands fatally to reason that as all these (save the Chian musician) seem to have been more modern, and as the works mentioned would exactly fall in with the business of the musician and the teacher of rhetoric, they are far more likely, if they ever existed (and Diogenes seems to cite rather the catalogue of a certain Thrasylus than the books themselves), *not* to have been the work of the Laughing Philosopher. At any rate, even if they were, we are utterly ignorant of their tenor.

Democritus.

That the other great Abderite, Protagoras, the disciple of Democritus himself, wrote on subjects of the kind, there can be no reasonable doubt. It is practically impossible that he should not have done so, though we have not the exact title of any. He is said to have been the first to distinguish the parts of an oration by name, to have made some important advances in technical grammar, and to have lectured on the poets. But here again we have no texts to appeal to, nor any certain fact.

Yet perhaps it is not mere critical whim to doubt whether, if we had these texts also, we should be much further advanced. The titles of those attributed to Democritus, if we could accept the attribution with any confidence, would make such scepticism futile. But we have no titles of critical works attributed to Protagoras; we only know vaguely that he lectured on the poets.[4] And from all the stories

The Sophists —earlier.

[1] ἐπέων. It is very difficult to be certain whether this means here "word," "song," or "epic."

[2] ὀρθοεπείης καὶ γλωσσέων.

[3] ῥημάτων.

[4] And the authority for this, Themistius, is very late. The catalogue of the works given by Diogenes Laertius (ed. cit., p. 240) includes nothing even distantly bearing on criticism.

about him as well as from the famous dialogue which puts the hostile view of his sophistry, we can conclude with tolerable certainty that his interests were mainly ethical, with perhaps a dash of grammar—the two notes, as we have seen and shall see, of all this early Greek criticism. Certainly this was the case with the Sicilian school which traditionally founded Rhetoric—Empedocles himself perhaps, Corax, Tisias, Gorgias, and the pupil of Gorgias, Polus, with more certainty. Here again most of our best evidence is hostile, and therefore to be used with caution; but the hostility does not affect the present point. Socrates or Plato could have put unfavourable views of Sophistic quite as well—indeed, considering Plato's curious notions of inventive art, perhaps better—in regard to Æsthetics. If ethics and philology, not criticism proper, are the subjects in which their adversaries try to make Protagoras and Gorgias cut a bad figure, we may be perfectly certain that these were the subjects in which they themselves tried to cut a good one. If they are not misrepresented—are not indeed represented at all—in the strict character of the critic, it can only be because they did not, for good or for ill, assume that character. The philosophy of language, the theory of persuasion, the moral character of poetry and oratory, these were the subjects which interested them and their hearers; not the sources of literary beauty, the division of literary kinds, the nature and varieties of style. Wherever ethic and metaphysic are left, the merest philology seems to have been the only alternative—the few phrases attributed to any writers of this period that bear a different complexion being *very* few, uncertainly authentic, and in almost every case extremely vague.

Nothing else could reasonably be expected when we consider the nature of Rhetoric as we find it exhibited in Aristotle himself, and as it was certainly conceived by its first inventors or nomenclators. It was the Art of Persuasion—the Art of producing a practical effect—almost the Art of Succeeding in Life. We shall see when we come to Aristotle himself that this was as inevitable *a priori* as it is certain in fact: for the present the certainty of the fact itself may content us. Where the few

recorded or imputed utterances of the later sophists do touch on literature they bear (with a certain additional ingenious wire-drawing) the same marks as those of the early philosophers. They play upon the "honourable deceit" of tragedy;[1] they tread harder the old road of allegorical interpretations;[2] they dwell on words and their nature;[3] or else, overshooting mark as far as elsewhere they fall short of it, they attempt ambitious theories of beauty in general, whether it is "harmony," utility, sensual pleasure, what not.[4] This is—to adopt the useful, if accidental, antithesis of metaphysic—metacritic, not criticism. And we shall not, I think, be rash in assuming that if we had the texts, which we have not, we should find—we are most certainly not rash in saying that in the actual texts we do find—nothing but excursions in the vestibules of Criticism proper, or attempts more or less in vain upon her secret chambers,—no expatiation whatever in her main and open halls.[5]

The Sophists —later.

Two only, and those two of the very greatest, of Greek writers before Aristotle—Plato and Aristophanes—furnish us with literary criticism proper, while of these two the first is a critic almost against his will, and the second one merely for the nonce. Yet we may be more than thankful for what they give us, and for the slight reinforcement, as regards the nature of pre-Aristotelian criticism, which we derive from a third and much lesser man—Isocrates.

It could not possibly be but that so great a writer as Plato, with an *ethos* so philosophical as his, should display a strong critical element. Yet there were in him other elements and tendencies, which repressed and distorted his criticism. To begin with, though he less often lingered in the vestibule than his enemies the sophists, he was by the whole tendency of his philosophy even more prompted than they were to make straight for the adytum, neglecting

Plato.

[1] Gorgias ap. Plutarch.

[2] Prodicus in the "Choice of Hercules."

[3] *V.* the *Cratylus*, *passim*.

[4] *V. Hippias Minor*.

[5] There is not the slightest evidence for assigning the *Rhetoric* called *ad Alexandrum*, and variously attributed to Aristotle and Anaximenes, to any pre-Aristotelian writer, least of all for giving it to Corax himself.

the main temple. Some form of the Ideal Theory is indeed necessary to the critic: the beauty of literature is hardly accessible, except to one who is more or less a Platonist. No system so well accounts for the ineffable poetic pleasure, the sudden "gustation of God" which poetry gives, as that of an archetypal form of every possible thought and passion, as well as person and thing, to which as the poet approaches closer and closer, so he gives his readers the deeper and truer thrill. But Plato's unfortunate impatience of anything but the idea pure and simple, led him all wrong in criticism. Instead of welcoming poetry for bringing him nearer to the impossible and unattainable, he chides it for interfering with possession and attainment. In the *Phædrus* and the *Republic* especially, but also elsewhere, poetic genius, poetic charm, poetry itself, are described, if not exactly defined, with an accuracy which had never been reached before, and which has never been surpassed since; in the same and other places the theory of Imitation, or, as it might be much better called, Representation, is outlined with singular acuteness and, so far as we know, originality, though it is pushed too far; and remarks on the divisions of literature, at least of poetry, show that a critic of the highest order is but a little way off. But then comes that everlasting ethical and political preoccupation which is at once the real forte and the real foible of the Greek genius, and (with some other peculiarities) succeeds to a great extent in neutralising the philosopher's critical position as a whole. In the first place, the "imitation" theory (imperfectly grasped owing to causes to be more fully dealt with later) deposes the poet from his proper position, and, combined with will-worship of the Idea, prevents Plato from seeing that the poet's duty, his privilege, his real reason for existence, is to "*dis*-realise," to give us things not as they are but as they are not. In the second, that curious, interesting, and in part most fruitful and valuable Manichæism which Idealism so often comports, makes him gradually look more and more down on Art as Art, more and more take imagination and invention as sinful human interferences with "reminiscence," and the simple acceptance of the Divine. In the third place, the heresy of instruction grows

His crotchets.

on him, and makes him constantly look, not at the intrinsic value of poetry, its connection with beauty, its importance to the free adult human spirit, but at its position in reference to the young, the private citizen, and so forth. These things sufficiently account for the at first sight almost unintelligible, though exquisitely put, caprices of the *Republic* and the *Laws*, which at their worst represent the man of letters and the man of art generally as a dangerous and anti-social nuisance, at the very best admit him as a sort of Board-Schoolmaster, to be rigidly kept in his place, and to be well inspected, coded, furnished with schedules and rules of behaviour, in order that he may not step out of it.

Even here, as always, there is some excuse for the choice *cum Platone errare*, not merely in the exquisiteness of the literary form which this unworthy view of literature takes, but in the fact that, as usual, Plato could not go wrong without going also right. He had probably seen in Athenian life, and he had certainly anticipated in his instinctive command of human nature, the complementary error and curse of "Art for Art only"—of the doctrine (itself, like his own, partly true, but, like his own also, partly false and mischievous) of the moral irresponsibility of the artist. And looking first at morals and politics with that almost feverish eagerness of the Greek philosopher, which was in great part justified by the subsequent Greek collapse in both, he shot wide of the bow-hand from the purely critical point of aim.

His compensations.

Yet where shall we find earlier in time, where shall we find nobler in tone at any time, a critical position to match with that of the *Phædrus* and the *Ion* as wholes, and of many other passages? That "light and winged and sacred thing the poet" had never had his highest functions so celebrated before, though in the very passage which so celebrates him the antithesis of art and delirium be dangerously overworked. Alas! it is in the power of all of us to avoid bad art, and it is not in the power of us all to secure good delirium! But this matters little, or at worst not so very much. No one can acknowledge more heartily than Plato—no one has acknowledged more poetically—that the poet is not a mere moralist, a

mere imitator, a mere handler of important subjects. And from no one, considering his other views, could the acknowledgment come with greater force and greater authority. In him and in that great enemy of his master, to whom we come next, we find first expressed that real enthusiasm for literature of which the best, the only true, criticism is but a reasoned variety.

If we but possessed that ode or pæan of Tynnichus[1] of Chalcis, which, it would appear from the *Ion*,[2] Plato not merely thought the only good thing among its author's works, but regarded as a masterpiece in itself! If we could but ourselves compare the works of Antimachus with those of the more popular Chœrilus, to which Plato himself is said to have so much preferred them that he sent to Colophon to have a copy made for his own use! Then we might know what his real literary preferences in the way of poetry were, instead of being put off with beautiful, invaluable, but hopelessly vague enthusiasms about poetic beauty in the abstract, and with elaborate polemics against Homer and Hesiod from a point of view which is not the point of view of literary criticism at all. But these things have been grudged us. There are assertions, which we would not only fain believe, but have no difficulty whatever in believing, that the aversion to poets represented in the *Republic* and the *Laws* was, if not feigned, hypothetical and, as one may say, professional. But this, though a comfort generally, is of no assistance to us in our present inquiry. The old comparison of the lantern "high, far-shining, *empty*" recurs depressingly.[3]

[1] Not only have we not this: we have practically nothing of Tynnichus. His page in Bergk (iii. 379) is blank, except for the phrase which Plato himself quotes: εὕρημά τι Μοισῶν — "a windfall of the Muses." Of a very commonplace distich about Agamemnon's ship, quoted by Procopius, we may apparently relieve him.

[2] 534 D.

[3] If the space and treatment here allotted to Plato seem exceeding poor and beggarly, it can but be urged that his own criticism of literature is so exceedingly *general* that in this book no other treatment of it was possible. On his own principles we should be "praising the horse in terms of the ass" if we did otherwise. It is true that besides the *attitude* above extolled, there are to be found, from the glancing, many-sided, parabolic discourse of the *Phædrus* to the mighty theory of the *Republic*, endless things invaluable, nay, indispensable, to the critic. It is nearly certain that, as Professor Butcher thinks, no one had anticipated him in the recognition of the organic unity necessary to a work of literary, as of all,

There have been periods, not the happiest, but also not the least important of her history, when Criticism herself would have absolutely fenced her table against Aristophanes. That a poet, and a dramatic poet, and a dramatic poet who permitted himself the wildest excesses of farce, should be dignified with the name of critic, would have seemed to the straiter sect a monstrous thing. Yet the Old Greek Comedy was emphatically "a criticism of life," and as such it could not fail to meddle with such an important part of Athenian life as Athenian literature. It might be not uninteresting, but is at best superfluous, if not positively irrelevant here, to point out how important that part was; the fact is certain. And while it is going rather a long way round to connect the rivalries of serious poets, and the alterations which these or other causes brought about in their works, with the history of criticism proper, there is no doubt of such a connection in the case of the work—fortunately in fairly large measure preserved—of Aristophanes, and with that—unfortunately lost, except in fragments—of his fellows.

Aristophanes.

Nor can there be very much doubt that, though our possessions might be greater in volume, we could hardly have anything better in kind than the work of Aristophanes, and especially the famous play of the *Frogs*, which was probably the earliest of all the masterpieces of hostile literary criticism, and which remains to this day among the very finest of them. Aristophanes indeed united, both generally and in this particular instance, all the requisites for playing the part to perfection, with one single exception—the possession, namely, of that wide comparative knowledge of other literatures which the Greeks lacked, and which, in this as in other matters, was their most serious deficiency

art. But even here, as in the messages "to Lysias and all others who write orations, to Homer and all others who write poems," to Solon, &c.," we see the generality, the abstraction, the evasiveness, one may almost say, of his critical gospel. Such concrete things as the reference to Isocrates at the end of the *Phædrus* are very rare; and, on the other hand, his frequent and full dealings with Homer are not literary criticism at all. In a treatise on Æsthetics Plato cannot have too large a space; in a History of Criticism the place allotted to him must be conspicuous, but the space small.

His own literary faculty was of the most exquisite as well as of the most vigorous kind. His possession, not merely of wit but of humour in the highest degree, saved him from one of the commonest and the greatest dangers of criticism—the danger of dwelling too long on single points, or of giving disproportionate attention to the different points with which he dealt. And though no doubt the making a dead-set at bad or faulty literature, not because it is bad or faulty, but because it happens to be made the vehicle of views in politics, religion, or what not which the critic dislikes, is not theoretically defensible; yet the historian and the practical philosopher must admit that, as a matter of fact, it has given us some of the very best criticism we have.

Nor has it given us anything much better than the *Frogs*. That the polemic against Euripides, here and elsewhere, is unfairly and excessively personal, is not to be denied; and even those who almost wholly agree with it from the literary side may grant that it admits, here and there, of an answer. But still as criticism it is both *magnifique* and also *la guerre*. The critic is no desultory snarler, unprovided with theory, and simply snapping at the heels of some one he dislikes. His twenty years' campaign against the author of the *Medea*, from the *Acharnians* to the *Frogs* itself, is thoroughly consistent: it rests upon a reasoned view of art and taste as well as of politics and religion. He disapproves the sceptical purpose, the insidious sophistic, the morbid passion of his victim; but he disapproves quite as strongly the tedious preliminary explanations and interpolated narratives, the "precious" sentiment and style, the tricks and the trivialities. And let it be observed also that Aristophanes, fanatic as he is, and rightly is, on the Æschylean side, is far too good a critic and far too shrewd a man not to allow a pretty full view of the Æschylean defects, as well as to put in the mouth of Euripides himself a very fairly strong defence of his own merits. The famous debate between the two poets, with the accompanying observations of Dionysus and the Chorus, could be thrown, with the least possible difficulty, into the form of a critical *causerie* which would anticipate by two thousand years

The Frogs.

and more the very shrewdest work of Dryden, the most thoughtful of Coleridge, the most delicate and ingenious of Arnold and Sainte-Beuve. It is indeed rather remarkable how easily literary criticism lends itself to the dramatic-poetical form, whether the ease be owing to the fact of this early and consummate example of it, or to some other cause. And what is especially noticeable is that, throughout, the censure goes documents in hand. The vague generalities of the *Poetics* in verse, in which, after Horace and Vida, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries delighted, are here eschewed in favour of direct criticism of actual texts. One might call the *Frogs*, borrowing the phrase from mediæval French, a review *par personnages*, and a review of the closest, the most stringent, and the most effective. We can indeed only be surprised that with such an example as this, and others not far inferior, in the same dramatist if not in others, formal criticism in prose should have been so long in making its appearance, and when it appeared, should have shown so much less mastery of method. Beside Aristophanes, the pure critical reviewing of Aristotle himself is vague, is desultory, and begins at the wrong end; even that of Longinus is scrappy and lacking in grasp; while it would be as unfair as it would be unkind to mention, in any comparison of genius with the author of the *Frogs*, the one master of something like formal critical examination of particular books and authors that Greek preserves for us in Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Other criticism in Comedy.

It is, however, extremely rash to conclude, as has sometimes been concluded, that because we find so much tendency towards literary criticism in Aristophanes, we should find a proportionate amount in other Comic writers (at least in those of the Old Comedy, who had perhaps most genius and certainly most *parrhesia*), if their works existed. The contrary opinion is far more probable. For though we have nothing but fragments, often insignificant in individual bulk, of the writers of the Old Comedy except Aristophanes, and of all the writers of the Middle—nothing but fragments, though sometimes not insufficient in bulk, of Menander, Philemon, and the other writers of the New—yet it must be re-

membered that these fragments are extremely numerous, and that in a very considerable number of cases, fragments as they are, they give a fair glimpse of context and general tone. I do not hesitate to say, after most careful examination of the collections of Meineke and his successors, that there are not more than one or two faint and doubtful approaches to our subject discoverable there. The passage of Pherecrates[1] on which M. Egger chiefly relies to prove his very wide assertion that "il n'y a peut-être pas un seul poète" of the Old Comedy "qui n'ait mêlé la critique littéraire à ses fictions comiques" deals with music, not literature. And it is exceedingly rash to argue from titles, which, as we know from those of the plays remaining to us in their entirety, bore as little necessary relation to contents in ancient as in modern times.

It may be pleaded, of course, that our comic fragments are very mainly preserved to us by grammarians, scholiasts, and lexicographers, who were more likely to find the unusual locutions for which they principally looked in those descriptions of the fishmarket and the stews, of which we have so many, than in literary disquisitions. But in these myriads of fragments, motelike as they often are, it is contrary to probability that we should not find at least a respectable proportion of allusions to any subject which was frequently treated by the comic writers, just as we do find references not merely to fish and the hetæræ, but to philosophy (such references are common enough), to cookery, politics, dress, and all manner of things *except* literary criticism. Parodies of serious pieces there may have been; but parody, though akin to criticism, is earlier,[2] and is rather criticism in the rough. And it is probable, or rather certain, that the example of the greatest of Comic poets was followed by the smaller fry in attacks on Euripides; but these attacks need not have been purely literary at all. The con-

[1] This passage, which is twenty-five lines long, is from the play *Chiron*, and may be found at p. 110 of the Didot edition of Meineke's *Poet. Com. Græc. Fragmenta*. Egger (p. 40) only gives it in translation. It is not in the least literary but wholly *musical* in subject, Music appearing in person and complaining of the alteration of the lyre from seven strings to twelve.

[2] Thus we find it constantly in the Middle Ages, where pure criticism is still almost unknown.

trast between comedy and tragedy attributed to Antiphanes[1] in his *Poiesis* bears solely on the subject, and the necessity of greater inventiveness on the part of the comic poet.

Simylus (?).

Once only, so far as I have been able to discover, do we come upon a passage which (if it be genuine, of which there seems to be doubt for more than one reason) has undoubted right to rank. This is the extremely, the almost suspiciously, remarkable passage attributed to the Middle Comic poet, Simylus, by Stobæus, who, be it remembered, can hardly have lived less than eight or nine hundred years later. This advances not only a theory of poetry and poetical criticism, but one of such astonishing completeness that it goes far beyond anything that we find in Aristotle, and is worthy of Longinus himself at his very happiest moment, while it is more complete than anything actually extant in the Περὶ Ὕψους. It runs as follows:[2] "Neither is nature without art sufficient to any one for any practical achievement, nor is art which has not nature with it. When both come together there are still needed a *choragia*,[3] love of the task, practice, a lucky occasion, time, a *critic able to grasp what is said*. If any of these chance to be missing, a man will not come to the goal set before him. Natural gifts, good will, painstaking, method—this is what makes wise and good poets. Number of years makes neither, but only makes them old."

[1] See Egger (p. 73), who as usual makes a little too much of it. The original may be found in Athenæus (at the opening of Bk. vi. 222 *a*: vol. i. p. 485, ed. Dindorf), where it is followed by a burlesque encomium on tragedy from the comic poet Timocles, or in Meineke, ed. cit., p. 397.

[2] As the Greek is not in some editions of Meineke's *Fragments*, and is not given by Egger at all, while his translation is very loose, it will be best to quote it in full from the former's edition of Stobæus' *Florilegium*, ii. 352:—

Οὔτε φύσις ἱκανὴ γίγνεται τέχνης ἄτερ πρὸς οὐδὲν ἐπιτήδευμα παράπαν οὐδενί, οὔτε πάλι τέχνη μὴ φύσιν κεκτημένη. τούτων ὁμοίως τοῖν δυοῖν συνηγμένων εἰς ταυτόν, ἔτι δεῖ προσλαβεῖν χορηγίαν, ἔρωτα, μελέτην, καιρὸν εὐφυῆ, χρόνον, κριτὴν τὸ ῥηθὲν δυνάμενον συναρπάσαι. ἐν ᾧ γὰρ ἂν τούτων τις ἀπολειφθεὶς τύχῃ, οὐκ ἔρχετ' ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τοῦ προκειμένου. φύσις, θέλησις, ἐπιμέλει', εὐταξία σοφοὺς τίθησι κἀγαθούς· ἐτῶν δέ τοι ἀριθμὸς οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν γῆρας ποιεῖ.

[3] *I.e.*, the official acceptance of the piece, and the supply of a chorus to bring it out. It ought, however, perhaps to be added that the word is often used in a more general sense, "appliances and means," pecuniary and otherwise.

It would be impossible to put the matter better after more than two thousand years of literary accumulation and critical experiment. But it is very hard to believe that it was said in the fourth century before Christ. The wits, indeed, are rather those of that period than of a later; but the experience is that of a careful comparer of more than one literature. In other words, it is the voice of Aristotle speaking with the experience of Quintilian. And it stands, let me repeat, so far as I have been able to discover, absolutely alone in the extant representation of the department of literature to which it is attributed.

Isocrates.

To pass from Aristophanes and Plato to Isocrates is to pass from persons of the first rank in literature to a person not of the first rank. Yet for our purpose the "old man eloquent" is not to be despised. On the contrary, he even has special and particular value. For the worst—as no doubt also the best—of men like Aristophanes and Plato is, that they are too little of their time and too much for all time. Moreover, in Isocrates we come not merely to a man above the common, though not reaching the summits of wit, but also to something like a "professional"—to some one who, to some extent, supplies the loss of the earlier professionals already mentioned.

To some extent only: for Isocrates, at least in so far as we possess his work, is a rhetorician on the applied sides, which commended themselves so especially to the Greeks, not on the pure side. The legend of his death, at least, fits the political interests of his life, his rhetoric is mostly judicial rhetoric; little as he is of a philosopher, he attacks the sophists as philosophers were in duty bound to do. His purely literary allusions (and they are little more) have a touch of that amusing, that slightly irritating, that wholly important and characteristic patronage and disdain which meets us throughout this period. He was at least believed to have written a formal *Rhetoric*, but it is doubtful whether we should find much purely literary criticism in it if we had it. His own style, if not exactly gaudy, is pretentious and artificial: we can hardly say that the somewhat vaguely favourable prophecy which

Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates about him at the end of the *Phædrus* was very conspicuously fulfilled. And his critical impulses cannot have been very imperative, seeing that though he lived till nearly a hundred, he never found the "happy moment"[1] to write about poetry spoken of in the 12th section of the Panathenaic with a scornful reference to those who "rhapsodised and chattered" in the Lyceum about Homer and Hesiod and other poets. Most of his actual literary references are, as usual, ethical, not literary. In the 12th and 13th section of the oration-epistle to Nicocles[2] he upbraids mankind for praising Hesiod and Theognis and Phocylides as admirable counsellers in life, but preferring to hear the most trumpery of comedies; and himself declares Homer[3] and the great tragic masters worthy of admiration because of their mastery of human nature. In the *Busiris*[4] he takes quite a Platonic tone about the blasphemies of poets against the gods. There is, indeed, a curious and interesting passage in the *Evagoras*[5] about the difficulties of panegyric in prose, and the advantages possessed by verse-writers. They have greater liberty of handling their subject; they may use new words and foreign words and metaphors; they can bewitch the soul with rhythm and metre till even bad diction and thought pass unnoticed. For if (says the rhetor naïvely enough) you leave the most celebrated poets their words and meaning, but strip them of their metre, they will cut a much shabbier figure than they do now. But this does not take us very far, and with Isocrates we get no further.

Nor need we expect to get any further. Criticism, in any full and fertile sense of the word, implies in all cases a considerable body of existing literature, in almost all cases the possibility of comparing literatures in different languages. The Greeks were but accumulating (though accumulating with marvellous rapidity) the one; they had as yet no opportunity of the other, and it must be confessed that they did not welcome the opportunity with any eagerness when it came. All the

[1] *εὐκαιρίαν*. Ed. Benseler (Leipsic, 1877), ii. 21.
[2] Ibid., i. 23.
[3] Ibid., i. 24.
[4] Section 16. Ibid., ii. 9, 10.
[5] Section 3. Ibid., i. 207, 208.

more glory to them that, when as yet the accumulation was but proceeding, they produced such work in the kind as that of Plato and Aristophanes; that at the first halt they made such astonishing, if in some ways such necessarily incomplete, use of what had been accumulated, as in the next chapter we shall see was made by Aristotle.

CHAPTER III.

ARISTOTLE.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE CRITICISM ATTRIBUTED TO ARISTOTLE—ITS SUBJECT-MATTER—ABSTRACT OF THE 'POETICS'—CHARACTERISTICS, GENERAL—*LIMITATIONS OF RANGE*—*ETHICAL TWIST*—DRAWBACKS RESULTING—OVERBALANCE OF MERIT—THE DOCTRINE OF *ἁμαρτία*—THE 'RHETORIC'—MEANING AND RANGE OF "RHETORIC"—THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK—ATTITUDE TO "LEXIS"—VOCABULARY: "FIGURES"—A DIFFICULTY—"FRIGIDITY"—ARCHAISM—STOCK EPITHET AND PERIPHRASIS—FALSE METAPHOR—SIMILE—"PURITY"—"ELEVATION"—PROPRIETY—PROSE RHYTHM—LOOSE AND PERIODIC STYLE, ETC.—GENERAL EFFECT OF THE 'RHETORIC'—THE "HOMERIC PROBLEMS"—VALUE OF THE TWO MAIN TREATISES—DEFECTS AND DRAWBACKS IN THE 'POETICS'—AND IN THE 'RHETORIC'—MERITS OF BOTH—"IMITATION"—THE END OF ART: THE *οἰκεία ἡδονή*—THEORY OF ACTION—AND OF *ἁμαρτία*—OF POETIC DICTION.

Authorship of the criticism attributed to Aristotle.

THE uncomfortable conditions which have prevailed during the examination of Greek criticism during the Pre-Aristotelian age disappear almost entirely when we come to Aristotle himself. Hitherto we have had either no texts at all, mere fragments and titles, or else documents fairly voluminous and infinitely interesting as literature, but as criticism indirect, accidental, and destitute of professional and methodical character. With the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* in our hands, no such complaints are any longer possible. It is true that in both cases certain other drawbacks, already glanced at, still exist, and that the *Poetics*, if not the *Rhetoric*, is obviously incomplete. But both, and especially the shorter and more fragmentary book, give us so much that it is almost unreasonable to demand more—nay, that

we can very fairly, and with no rashness, divine what the "more" would have been like if we had it. In these two books the characteristics of Greek criticism, such as it was and such as probably in any case it must have been, are revealed as clearly as by a whole library.

In dealing with them we are happily, here as elsewhere, freed from a troublesome preliminary examination as to genuineness. There is no reasonable doubt on this head as far as the *Rhetoric* goes, and I should myself be disposed to say that there is no reasonable doubt as to the *Poetics*, but others have thought differently. It so happens, however, that for our special purpose it really does not matter so very much whether the book is genuine or not. For it can hardly by any possibility be much later than Aristotle, and that being so it gives us what we want—the critical views of Greek literature when the first great age of that literature was pretty well closed. It is by Aristotle, probably, by X or Z possibly, but in any case by a man of wide knowledge, clear intellect, and methodical habits.

Before we examine in detail what these views were, let us clearly understand what was the literature which this person (whom in both cases we shall call, and who in both pretty certainly was, Aristotle) had before him. The bulk of it was in verse, and though unfortunately a large proportion of that bulk is now lost, we have specimens, and (it would seem) many, if not most, of the best specimens, of all its kinds. Of a great body of epic or quasi-epic verse, only Homer and Hesiod survive; but Homer was admittedly the greatest epic, and Hesiod the greatest didactic, poet of this class. In the course of less than a century an enormous body of tragic drama had been accumulated, by far the greatest part of which has perished; but we possess ample specimens of the (admittedly) first Three in this kind also. Of the great old comic dramatists, Aristophanes survives alone—a mere volume, so to speak, of the library which Aristotle had before him: yet it is pretty certain that if we had it all, the quantity rather than the degree and kind of literary pleasure given by the series from the *Acharnians* to the *Plutus* would be increased. We are worst off in regard to lyric: it is here that Aristotle has the greatest ad-

Its subject-matter.

vantage over his modern readers. Yet, by accident or not (it may be strongly suspected *not*), it is the advantage of which he avails himself least. On the other hand, some kinds — the pastoral, the very miscellaneous kind called epigram, and others—were scarcely yet full grown; and, much of them as is lost, we have more advantage of him.

In prose he had (or at least so it would seem likely) a lesser bulk of material, and what he had was subject to a curious condition, of which more hereafter. But he had nearly all the best things that we have—Plato and Xenophon, Herodotus and Thucydides, all the greatest of the orators. Here, however, his date again subjected him to disadvantages, the greatest of which—one felt in every page of the *Poetics*, and not insensible in the *Rhetoric*—was the absence, entire or all but entire, of any body of prose fiction. The existence, the date, the subjects, the very verse or prose character of the "Milesian tales," so often talked of, are all shadows of shades, and whatever they were, Aristotle takes no count of them. It seems to be with him a matter of course that "fiction" and "poetry" are coextensive and synonymous.[1]

Of the enormous and, to speak frankly at once, the very disastrous, influence which this limitation of his subject-matter has on him, it will be time to speak fully later. Let us first see what this famous little treatise[2] — than which perhaps no other document in the world, not religious or political, has been the occasion of fuller discussion — does actually contain.

[1] He does, no doubt, refer to the prose mimes, *v. infra*, and in referring at the same time to the "Socratic dialogues" he *may* be specially thinking of the "Egyptian and other" stories with which Socrates was wont, half to please, half to puzzle, his hearers. But his whole treatment of Tragedy and Epic is really based on some such assumption as that in the text.

[2] I need hardly express, but could not possibly omit the expression of, my indebtedness to my friend and colleague Professor Butcher's admirable edition and translation of the work in *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (London, 2nd ed., 1898), a book which, as much as any other for many years past, enables English scholarship to hold its head up with that of other countries. Nor need I make any apologies for occasionally differing, on the purely critical side, with him as to the interpretation of a document which is admittedly very obscure in parts, and on even the clearest parts of which opinion, not demonstration, must decide in very many cases.

He first defines his scheme as dealing with poetry itself and its various kinds, with their essential parts, with the structure of the plot, the number and nature of the parts, and the rest of poetic method. Then he lays it down that Epic, Tragedy, Comedy, Dithyrambic, as well as *auletice* and *kitharistice* generally, are *mimesis*—"imitation," as it is generally translated—but that they differ in the medium, the objects, and the manner of that imitation. And after glancing at music and dancing as non-literary mimetic arts, he turns to the art which imitates by language alone. Here he meets a difficulty: there is, he thinks, no common name which will suit the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus, the "Socratic dialogues," and iambic or elegiac *mimesis*. He objects strongly to the idea that metre makes the poet, and produces instances, among which the most striking is his refusal of the name poet to Empedocles. Having disposed of the *medium*—rhythm, metre, &c.—he turns to the objects. Here he has no doubt: the *objects* of mimesis are men in action, and we must represent them as "better than life" (heroic or idealising representation), as they are (realistic), or worse (caricature or satire). The *manner* does not seem to suggest to him much greater diversity than that of epic (or direct narrative), and dramatic, as to the latter of which he has a slight historical excursus.

Abstract of the Poetics.

Then he philosophises. Poetry, he says, has two causes: one the instinct of imitation, with the pleasure attached to it; the other, the instinct for harmony. And then he again becomes historical, and reviews briefly Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, and the progress of poetry under them.

Comedy he dismisses very briefly. He thinks that it ἔλαθε διὰ τὸ μὴ σπουδάζεσθαι — little attention was paid to it, as not being taken seriously. Epic and tragedy must be treated first—tragedy first of all. And then he plunges straight into the famous definition of tragedy, discussion of which had best be reserved. The definition itself is this: "An imitation of an action, serious, complete, and possessing magnitude, in language sweetened with each kind of sweetening in the several parts, conveyed by action and not recital, possessing pity and terror,

accomplishing the purgation of such[1] emotions." Tragedy will require scenic arrangements, musical accompaniments, and "words," as modern actors say; his own term, "lexis," is not so very different. But it will also require character, "thought," and plot or story. The most important of all is the last, which he also describes by another name, the "setting together of incidents," the Action — to which he thinks character quite subsidiary, and indeed facultative. There cannot, he says categorically, be tragedy without action; there may be without character. "The most powerful elements of emotional interest," as Professor Butcher translates *οἷς ψυχαγωγεῖ*, "the things with which tragedy leads souls," are revolutions and discoveries, and these are parts of action. Novices can do good things in diction and in character, not in plot. Still Character is second. Thought is third, Diction apparently a bad fourth. Song is only a chief embellishment or "sweetening," and Scenery is the last of all, because, though influencing the soul, it is inartistic and outside poetry. So he turns once more as to the principal or chief thing, to the plot or action. This is to be a complete whole, and of a certain magnitude, with a beginning, middle, and end. A very small animal organism[2] cannot be beautiful, as neither can one "ten thousand stadia long." Then he comes to the great question of Unity—or, since that word is much blurred by usage, let us say "what makes the story one." It is not enough to have a single hero; life, even a part of a life, is too complicated for that. We must have just so much and just so little that the action shall present neither gaps nor redundancies. Nor need the poet by any means stick to historical or prescribed fact—the probable, not the actual,

[1] There are strong arguments for rendering *τῶν τοιούτων* not "such" but "these," and Professor Butcher actually does so.

[2] Here one of the first very important differences of interpretation comes in. Professor Butcher would translate *ζῷον* "picture," as though it were short for *ζῷον γεγραμμένον*. Scholars differ whether the word *can* by itself have this meaning, and on such a point I have no pretensions to decide. But its more common sense is certainly "living organism," and I feel certain that this is the only meaning which makes full critical sense here. To begin with, Aristotle has just used it in this way, and in the second place the analogy of another *art* would come in very ill. We want a comparison drawn from *nature*, to give us the law for the imitation of nature.

is his game. He may invent wholly (subject to this law of probability) if he likes. Plots with episodes are bad.

We have, however, to go further. Not only must the action of tragedy be complete and probable, but it must deal with terrible and pitiful things: if these surprise us, so much the better. After distinguishing between simple plots (without Revolution and Discovery) or complex (with them), and describing these two elements at more length, he attacks, in a rather suspected passage, the Parts—Prologue, Episode, Exodus,[1] the choric part, &c.—and then, preferring the complex scheme, shows how it is to be managed. The hero must not blamelessly pass from prosperity to adversity, nor blamefully in the opposite direction. He must be a person of considerable position, who by some error or weakness (*ἁμαρτία*) comes to misfortune. Also the special kind of pity and terror which is to be employed to make him interesting, the *oikeia hedone* of tragedy, is most important, not a few examples being taken in illustration from the great tragedians.

Then we pass to Character. It must be good—even a woman is good sometimes—it must be appropriate, true to life, and consistent. Probability is here as important as in Action; the *Deus ex machina* is to be used with extreme caution. After turning to the details of Discovery, and dealing with Gesture, Scene, &c., he goes to the two main stages of Tragedy, *desis* and *lusis*, Twisting and Unravelling, and to its four kinds (an extension of his former classification)—Simple, Complex, Pathetic, and Ethical. And the tragic poet is especially warned against Tragedy with an Epic structure—that is to say, a variety of plots. The Chorus must bear part in the action, and not give mere interludes.

"Thought" is somewhat briefly referred to Rhetoric (*vide infra*), and then we come to Diction. This is treated rather oddly, though the oddity will not seem so odd to those who have carefully studied the contents, still more the texts, of the foregoing chapter. Much of the handling is purely grammatical.

[1] "Episode" is here defined in quite a new sense as the dialogue *between* choruses; "Exodus" as that which no chorus follows. The chapter is doubtful—or something more.

The "Figures," especially metaphor, make some appearance: and of style proper we hear little more than that it is to be clear without being mean, though we have some illuminative examples of this difference.

Then Aristotle passes briefly to Epic, his prescription for which is an application of that already given—the single action, with its beginning, middle, and end. The organism, with its *oikeia hedone*, the parts, the kinds are the same, with the exception of song and scenery. The only differences are scale (Epic being much larger) and metre, with a fuller allowance for the improbable, the irrational. Some rather desultory remarks on difficulties of criticism or interpretation follow, and the piece ends abruptly with a consideration of the purely academic question whether Epic or Tragedy ranks higher. Some had given the primacy to Epic: Aristotle votes for Tragedy, and gives his reasons.

This summary has been cut down purposely to the lowest point consistent with sufficiency and clearness; but I trust it is neither insufficient nor obscure. We may now see what can be observed in it.

Characteristics, general.

We observe, in the first place, not merely a far fuller dose of criticism than in anything studied hitherto, but also a great advance of critical *theory*. Not only has the writer got beyond the obscure, fragmentary, often irrelevant, utterances of the early philosophers; but he is neither conducting a particular polemic, as was Aristophanes, nor speaking to the previous question, like Plato. An *a posteriori* proof of the depth and solidity of the inquiry may be found in the fact that it is still, after more than two thousand years, hardly in the least obsolete. But we are not driven to this: its intrinsic merit is quite sufficient.

At the same time, there are certain defects and drawbacks in it which are of almost as much importance as its merits, and which perhaps require prior treatment. That it is incomplete admits of no doubt; that part of it shows signs of corruption, that there are possible garblings and spurious insertions, does not admit of very much. But the view throughout is so firm and consistent; the incidental remarks tally so well with what

we should expect; and, above all, the exclusions or belittlings are so significant, that if the treatise were very much more complete, it would probably not tell us very much more than we know or can reasonably infer already.

In the first place, we can see, partly as a merit and partly as a drawback, that Aristotle has not merely confined himself with philosophical exactness to the Greek literature actually before him, but has committed the not unnatural, though unfortunate, mistake of taking that literature as if it were final and exhaustive. He generalises from his materials, especially from Homer and the three Tragedians, as if they provided not merely admirable examples of poetic art, but a Catholic body of literary practice to go outside of which were sin. It is impossible not to feel, at every moment, that had he had the *Divina Commedia* and Shakespeare side by side with the *Iliad* and Æschylus, his views as to both Epic and Tragedy might have been modified in the most important manner. And I at least find it still more impossible not to be certain that if there had been a Greek Scott or a Greek Thackeray, a Greek Dumas or a Greek Balzac before him, his views as to the constitutive part of poetry being not subjective form but "imitative" substance would have undergone such a modification that they might even have contradicted these now expressed. If tragedy, partly from its religious connection, partly from its overwhelming vogue, but most of all from the flood of genius which had been poured into the form for two or three generations past, had not occupied the position which it did occupy in fact, it would probably not have held anything like its present place in the *Poetics*. And so in other ways. It may be consciously, it may be unconsciously, Aristotle took the Greek and especially the Attic, literature, which constituted his library, and treated this as if it were all literature. What he has executed is in reality an induction from certain notable but by no means all-embracing phenomena; it has too much of the appearance, and has too often been taken as having more than the appearance, of being an authoritative and inclusive description of what universally is, and universally ought to be.

Limitations of range.

We have also to take into account the Greek fancy for generalising and philosophising, especially with a strong ethical preoccupation. Aristotle does not show this in the fantastic directions of the earlier allegorising critics, but he is doubly and trebly ethical. He has none of the Platonic doubts about Imitation as being a bad thing in itself, but he is quite as rigid in his prescription of good subjects. Although we have no full treatment of Comedy, his distaste —almost his contempt—for it is clear; and debatable as the famous "pity and terror" clause of the definition of tragedy may be, its ethical drift is unmistakable.

Ethical twist.

Thus his criticism, consciously or unconsciously, is warped and twisted by two unnecessary controlments. On the one hand, he looks too much at the actual occupants of his bookcase, without considering whether there may not be another bookcase filled with other things, as good but different. On the other, he is too prone, not merely to generalise from his facts as if they were the only possible facts, but to "overstep the genus" a little in his generalisation, and to merge Poetics in Ethics. That others went further than he did, that they said later that a hero must not only be good but white, and superadded to his Unity of Action a Unity of Time and a Unity of Place, which his documents do not admit, and which his doctrines by no means justify, are matters for which, no doubt, he is not to be blamed. But of the things for which he is legitimately responsible, some are not quite praiseworthy.

Drawbacks resulting.

In the first place, "Imitation" is an awkward word, though no doubt it is more awkward in the English than in the Greek, and "Representation" or "Fiction" will get us out of part of the difficulty. Not only does this term for the secondary creation proper to art belittle it too much, but it suggests awkward and mischievous limitations: it ties the poet's hands and circumscribes his aims.[1] Indirectly it is perhaps responsible for

[1] In all modern languages, though no doubt not in Greek, "Imitation" carries with it a fatal suggestion of copying previous examples of art, and not going direct to Nature at all. I think there is no reasonable doubt that this suggestion is responsible by itself for much of the mistakes of modern "Classical" criticism in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. You must "imitate" Homer, Virgil, Milton, not "represent" Nature.

Aristotle's worst critical slip—his depreciation of Character in comparison with Action. This very depreciation is, however, a serious shortcoming; and so is the failure to recognise, despite some not indistinct examples of it in the matter before him from the *Odyssey* downwards, what has been called "Romantic Unity," that is to say, the Unity given by Character itself, though the action may be linear and progressive rather than by way of *desis* and *lusis*. The attempt to extend (save in respect of scale only) the limitations of Tragedy to Epic is another fault; and so perhaps is the great complexity and the at least not inconsiderable obscurity of the definition of Tragedy itself. In such a treatise as this it is possible merely to allude to the famous clause, "through pity and terror effecting the *katharsis* of such emotions." Volumes have been written on these few words,[1] the chief crux being, of course, the word *katharsis*. It cannot be said that any of the numerous solutions is by itself and to demonstration correct, but it is clear that the addition is out of keeping with the rest of the definition. Hitherto Aristotle, whether we agree with him or not, has been purely literary, but he now shifts to ethics. You might almost as well define fire in terms strictly appropriate to physics, and then add, "effecting the cooking of sirloins in a manner suitable to such objects."

Overbalance of merit.

Yet the advantages of this criticism far exceed its drawbacks. In the first place it is, not merely so far as we positively know, but by all legitimate inference, the earliest formal treatise on the art in European literature. In the second place, even if it sticks rather too close to its individual subject, that individual subject was, as it happens, so marvellously rich and perfect that no such great harm is done. A man will always be handicapped by attempting to base criticism on a single literature, yet he who knows Greek only will be in far better case than he who only knows any one other, except in so far as the knowledge of any later litera-

[1] Those who do not care to "grapple with whole libraries" will find excellent handlings of the question in Butcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-267, and Egger, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-300.

ture inevitably conveys an indirect dose of knowledge of Greek.

Then, too, Aristotle's use of his material is quite astonishingly judicious. In almost every single instance we might expect his limitations to do him more harm than they have done. He might, for instance, with far more excuse than Wordsworth, have fallen into Wordsworth's error of considering metre not merely as not essential to poetry, but as only accidentally connected with it. And it is also extremely remarkable how little, on the whole, his ethical preoccupation carries him away. He exhibits it; but it does not blind him (as it had blinded even Plato) to the fact that the special end of Art is pleasure, that the perfection of literature is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Even more surprising is the acuteness, the sufficiency, and the far-reaching character of his doctrine of the Tragic *ἁμαρτία*. For there can be no question that he has here hit on the real differentia of tragedy—a differentia existing as well in the tragedy of Character, which he rather pooh-poohs, and in the Romantic tragedy which he did not know, and on his actual principles was bound to disapprove if he had known it, as in the Classical. Shakespeare joins hands with Æschylus (and both stand thus more sharply contrasted with inferior tragedians than in any other point) in making their chief tragic engine "the pity of it," the sense that there is infinite excuse, but no positive justification, for the acts which bring their heroes and heroines to misfortune. Wherever the tragedian, of whatever style and time, has hit this *ἁμαρτία*, this human and not disgusting "fault," he has triumphed; wherever he has missed it, he has failed, in proportion to the breadth of his miss.

The doctrine of ἁμαρτία.

With respect to the minor and verbal points of the *Poetics* there is less to say, because there is very much less of them: and what there is to say had better be said when we have considered the contents of the other great critical book, the *Rhetoric*, which may be taken as holding, if not intentionally yet actually, something of the same position towards Prose as that which the *Poetics* holds towards verse.

The Rhetoric.

Before giving an analysis of this book,[1] to match that given above of the *Poetics*, a few words may properly be said to justify what may seem to be the rather arbitrary proceeding of, on the one hand, attaching to Rhetoric a sense avowedly somewhat different from Aristotle's, and on the other dropping consideration of the major part of what he has actually written in it

Meaning and range of "Rhetoric"

It is a mistake to force too much the bare meanings of words, but I suppose one may, without much danger of controversy, take the bare meaning of Rhetoric to be "speechcraft." Now, it is not difficult to prove that, in Aristotle's time, speechcraft practically included the whole of prose literature, if not the whole of literature. Poems were recited, histories were read out, the entire course of scientific and philosophic education and study went on by lecture or by dialogue Nay, it is perhaps not fanciful to point out that the very words for reading, *ἀναγιγνώσκω* and *ἐπιλέγομαι*, seem to represent it as at best a secondary and parasitic process, a "going over again" of something previously said and heard[2]

Yet though this is an important point, and has been rather too commonly overlooked, it is no doubt inferior in gravity to the universally recognised fact that the importance of speechcraft proper, of oratory, was in Greece such as it is now only possible dimly to realise Every public and private right of the citizen depended upon his power to speak or the power of somebody else to speak for him, a tongue-tied person not only had no chance of rising in the State, but was liable to

[1] No edition with commentary can here be recommended to English readers with quite such confidence as Professor Butcher's *Poetics* That of E M Cope (3 vols, Cambridge, 1877), with a fourth, but earlier, volume of Introduction (London, 1867), is extremely full and useful, though the Germans (see Romer's edition after Spengel, Pref, p xxxiv) scoff at its text Dr Welldon's translation is well spoken of and the old "Oxford" version, reprinted with some corrections in Bohn's Library, is not contemptible, while Hobbes's "Brief" (or Analysis), which accompanies it, is very valuable indeed But here, as elsewhere, he who neglects the original neglects it at his peril

[2] Professor Butcher rather doubts this stress of mine on the prepositions, and points out to me that *ἐπιλέγομαι* (in the sense of reading) is almost exclusively Herodotean, and never established itself generally in Greek But he admits that the more usual employment of *ἀναγιγνώσκω* for "reading *aloud*" bears on my point.

be insulted, and plundered, and outraged in every way. To some it has seemed that the great and almost fatal drawback to that Athenian life, which in not a few ways was life in a sort of Earthly Paradise, was the incessant necessity of either talking or being talked to. It was therefore not in the least wonderful that the first efforts—those of the Sicilian sophists (or others)—to reduce to something like theory the art of composition, of arranging words effectively, should be directed to *spoken* words, and to spoken words more particularly under the all-important conditions of the public meeting and the law court—by no means neglecting the art of persuasion, as practicable in the Porch, or the Garden, or the private supper-room. That prose literature—that all literature—has for its object to give pleasure dawned later upon men. Aristotle and persons much earlier than Aristotle—Corax and Tisias themselves—would probably have acknowledged that prose, like poetry, ought to please, but only as a further means to a further end, persuasion. Its object was to make men *do* something—pass or negative such a law, bring in such a verdict, appoint such an officer, or (in the minor cases) believe or disbelieve such a tenet, adopt or shun such a course of conduct. Even in poetry, as we have seen, the ethical preoccupation partly obscured the clear æsthetic doctrine—you were to be purged as well as pleased, and pleased in order that you might be purged. But in prose the pleasure became still more subsidiary, ancillary, facultative. You were first of all to be "persuaded."

The contents of the book.

Now, if this be taken as granted, and if, further, we keep in mind Aristotle's habit of sticking to the facts before him, we shall not be in the least surprised to find that the *Rhetoric* contains a great deal of matter which has either the faintest connection with literary criticism, or else no connection with it at all. It is true that of the three subjects which the *Rhetoric* treats, *pistis* (means of persuasion), *lexis* (style), and *taxis* (arrangement), the second belongs wholly and the third very mainly to our subject, while it would be by no means impossible for an ingenious arguer to make good the position that *pistis*, with no extraordinary violence of transition, may be laid at least under contribution for that *attractive*

quality which all literature as a pleasure-giving art must have. But in actual handling *Pistis* has two out of the three books, and is treated, as a rule, from a point of view which leaves matters purely literary out of consideration altogether—"The Characteristics of Audiences," "The Colours of Good and Evil," "The Passions as likely to exist in an Audience," "The Material of Enthymeme" (the special rhetorical syllogism), and so forth.

Only in the third book (which, by the way, is shorter than either of the other two) do we get beyond these counsels to the advocate and the public speaker, into the Higher Rhetoric which concerns all prose literature and even some poetry. And even then we meet with a sort of *douche* of cold water which may not a little dash those who have not given careful heed to the circumstances of the case.

Attitude to lexis.

Inquiry into the sources and means of persuasion (our author admits graciously, but with a touch of superiority which, as we shall see, accentuates itself later) does not quite exhaust Rhetoric. It must also discuss style and arrangement. But style is a modern thing, and, rightly considered, something *ad captandum*.[1] Indeed Aristotle never seems to keep it quite clear from mere elocution or delivery —from the art of the actor as contradistinguished from that of the writer. He remarks that he has dealt with style fully in his *Poetics;* and as he has certainly not done so in the *Poetics* which we have, this is an argument that they are incomplete, though by no means that they are spurious. But it is almost impossible to mistake the touch of patronage, not to say of scorn, with which he deals with it here, and we need not doubt that, if we had the other handling to which he refers, something of the same sort would appear there. The fact is, that the Greeks of this period were what we may call High-fliers; anything that had the appearance of being "mechanical," anything that seemed to subject the things of the spirit to something not wholly of the spirit, they regarded with suspicion and impatience, which rather suggests the objection of some theologians to good works. Words, like colours, materials

[1] Τὸ περὶ τὴν λέξιν ὀψὲ προῆλθεν· καὶ δοκεῖ φορτικὸν εἶναι, καλῶς ὑπολαμβανόμενον. See note at end of chapter.

of sculpture and architecture, and the like, were "filthy rags"; and if Aristotle's common-sense carried him a little less far in this direction than his master Plato's philosophical enthusiasm, it certainly carried him some way.

This same common-sense, however, seldom deserted him, and it makes sometimes wholly for good, sometimes a little less so, throughout the treatise. At the very outset he commits himself to that definition of style as being first of all *clear*—as giving the meaning of the writer—which has so often captivated noble wits down to Coleridge's time, and even since, but which yet is clearly wrong, for "two and two make four" is the *a per se* of clearness, and there is uncommonly little style in it notwithstanding. That he himself saw this objection cannot be doubted, for he hastens to add[1] that it must be not only clear, but neither too low nor too far above the subject, thus producing a useful and perfectly just distinction between the styles of poetry and prose. And then he gives us, as he had done in the *Poetics*, one of those distinctions of his which are so valuable—the distinction of vocabulary into what is κύριον or current (which conduces to clearness), and what is ξένον or unfamiliar (which conduces to elevation). Let us note that this, like the ἁμαρτία theory in the *Poetics*, is one of Aristotle's great critical achievements. But the note of greatness may perhaps be discovered less in the attention which from this point he begins to pay to Metaphor. Not of course that metaphor is not a very important thing; but that the example of ticking it off in this fashion with a name spread rapidly in Rhetoric, and became a mere nuisance. Even Quintilian, who spoke words of wit and sense about the Greek mania for baptising new Figures, submitted to them to some extent: and any one who wishes to appreciate the need of Butler's jest to the effect that

> "all a rhetorician's rules
> Teach nothing but to name his tools,"

Vocabulary —"*Figures.*"

[1] He had earlier, in the most grudging context, admitted that *lexis* gives *character* to a speech, that συμβάλλεται πολλὰ πρὸς τὸ φανῆναι ποιον τινα τὸν λόγον—a confession from which can be extracted, at least in germ, all that a very fanatic of style need contend for.

has no farther to look than to the portentous list at the end of Puttenham's *Art of Poetry*.

Yet his cautions as to metaphors themselves, which he regards as the chief means of embellishment in prose, are perfectly just and sound. They must, he says, be selected with careful reference to the particular effect intended to be produced, be euphonious, not far-fetched, and drawn from beautiful objects.

A difficulty.

Here, perhaps as well as in reference to any single passage in the *Poetics*, we have an opportunity of considering for the first time a difficulty, not unexpected, not uninteresting, which meets us, and which will recur frequently, in ancient (and sometimes in the most modern) criticism. It is the difficulty which so did please Locke and his followers in the attack on the doctrine of Innate Ideas,—in other words, the difficulty of an apparently hopeless difference of standard on points of taste—the difference between Greek and modern love, between English and Hottentot beauty. One should, says the philosopher, say ῥοδοδάκτυλος rather than φοινικοδάκτυλος, while ἐρυθροδάκτυλος is the worst of all. The commentators have tried to get out of the difficulty by suggesting that the last suggests the redness of frost-bitten or domestically disfigured fingers. φοινικοδάκτυλος would in the same way, I suppose, be considered as objectionable because the colour is overcharged in the epithet, and might even suggest "red-handed" in the sense of "bloodstained." Yet one may doubt whether Aristotle's objection is based on anything but the fact that Homer uses the one epithet, not the others. The verb ἐρυθριάω, at any rate, is invariably used for blushing, not an unattractive or unbeautiful proceeding by any means. And we shall find very much stronger instances of this difficulty later.

"Frigidity."

The explanation is partly supplied by the very next section, which deals with ψυχρότης, and is one of the most valuable keys existing to the whole tone of Greek, indeed of classical, criticism. It is rather unlucky that "frigidity," our only equivalent, is not quite clear to English ears. In fact, "fustian" comes nearest to what is meant, though it is not completely adequate and coextensive. The idea is not

difficult to follow—it is that of something which is intended to excite and inflame the auditor or reader, while in fact it leaves him cold, if it does not actually lower his spiritual temperature. Aristotle gives four cases, or (which is nearly the same thing) four kinds of it—words excessively compounded, foreign terms, too emphatic or minute epithets, and improper metaphors. To these, as generalities, few would object, but the instances are sometimes decidedly puzzling. Lycophron (the sophist, not the poet) is blamed for calling the heavens πολυπρόσωπον ("many-visaged"), the earth μεγαλοκόρυφον ("mightily mountain-topped"), and the shore στενοπόρον ("leaving a narrow passage between cliff and sea"). Now, perhaps these terms are too poetical, yet we should hardly call them frigid, for they are not untrue to nature, and they not only show thought and imagination in the writer, but excite both in the reader. Still, they are all slightly *excessive;* they pass measure, as do other things blamed in Alcidamas and Gorgias still more.

Archaism.

The second objection is of still greater interest, because it has practically supplied a shibboleth in the Classic-Romantic debate up to the present moment. It is the objection to archaic, foreign, and otherwise inusitate words, which Aristotle seems to apply even to Homeric terms, not as poetic but as obsolete, just as other good persons in times nearer our own have applied the same to Chaucerisms and the like. The sounder doctrine, of course, is that *nullum tempus occurrit regi* in this transferred sense also—that what the old kings of literature have stamped remains current for ever, and what the new kings of literature stamp takes currency at once.

Stock epithet and periphrasis.

Almost as interesting is the third punishment-cell, in which epithets too long, too many, or out of place are bestowed. The two habits which seem to be mainly aimed at here (Alcidamas is still the chief awful example) are the use in prose of the poetical perpetual epithet ("white milk" is the example chosen) and the undue tendency to periphrasis, which, curiously enough, reminds one of the besetting sin of the extreme "Classical" school of the last century.

Most puzzling of all are the examples pilloried for impropriety in the fourth class, the unfortunate Alcidamas being

rebuked for calling philosophy "the intrenchment of law," and the Odyssey a "mirror of human life." The most thoroughgoing Aristotelians have given up this last criticism with an acknowledgment that ancient and modern tastes differ; while Mr Cope even suggests that Aristotle "winked," not nodded, when he wrote the whole passage. I do not so easily figure to myself a winking Stagirite.

False metaphor.

In the chapter on Simile which follows there is much that is sensible, but nothing that is surprising—the relation of simile and metaphor being the main point. One's expectations are more raised in coming to the great subject of "purity" of style—"Hellenising," "writing Greek." This phrase, in our author, is directed against something corresponding rather to the French "fautes de Français" than to our "not English," having regard to the syntax, the sentence-building, rather than to the actual diction. But it differs from both in having, like so much of his criticism, more to do with matter than form. In fact, it has been well observed that "Perspicuity" rather than "Purity" is really the subject of the chapter. It is, however, of great importance, and the next, on Elevation, or Grandeur, or Dignity, is of greater still. Some slight difficulty may occur at starting with the word thus variously rendered in English, ὄγκος. In its non-rhetorical use, the word (which strictly means "bulk," with the added notion of weight) inclines rather to an unfavourable signification, often signifying "pretentiousness," "pomposity": it is sometimes used later in Rhetoric itself with such a meaning; and I think those who compare the earlier passage on Frigidity will be inclined to suspect that Aristotle himself was not using it entirely *honoris causa*. He gives, however, some hints for its attainment, and a bundle of instances, where our ignorance of the context makes the illustrative power somewhat small.

Simile.

"Purity."

"Elevation."

Next we come to that quality of τὸ πρέπον, "the becoming," "propriety," which is commonly and not wrongly taken to be the special note of "classical" writing. And we have rules for its attainment, some ethical rather than æsthetic, some æsthetic enough but curiously arbitrary, as that

Propriety.

unusual words are not appropriate *except to* a person in a state of excitement. At the close there is an interesting glance at the irony of Gorgias and of Socrates.

The next division is one of the very *apices* of the whole. It deals with that subject of the rhythm of prose which, though (as we see from Quintilian as well as from Aristotle) never neglected by the ancients, is one of the most difficult parts of their critical Rhetoric for us to understand, and (perhaps for that reason) has been, till the last hundred years or so, strangely neglected in the criticism of modern languages.

Prose rhythm.

We see from its very opening words that the great distinctions between verse and prose literature on the one hand, and between literary and non-literary composition on the other, had been already hit upon. Prose style, says he, must be neither *emmetron* nor *arrhythmon*—that is to say, it must not have metre nor lack rhythm. But he does not very accurately define the difference between these things; and it cannot be said that any of his commentators and successors have supplied this defect, though it is easy enough to do so.[1] He, however, allows feet if not metre in prose, and proceeds to inquire what feet will do, making observations on the subject which are in the three degrees of obscurity to all who are not fond of guessing. Dactylic, iambic, and trochaic rhythms are dismissed for various reasons, rather bad than good—it not having apparently struck the critic that all these arrange themselves too *easily*, certainly, and definitely into metre. He pitches finally on the pæan, a foot which, though admissible in those Greek choric measures which are a sort of compromise between prose and poetry, at once reveals its suitableness for prose in modern languages by the fact that it is unsuitable for modern verse. The pæan or pæon is a tetrasyllabic foot, consisting of three short syllables and a long one, of which in strictness there may be four varieties, the long syllable being admissible in any of the four places. But Aristotle only admits two, with the long syllable in the first and fourth place respectively. And here, most tantalisingly, he breaks off.

[1] Metre being neither more nor less than definitely *recurrent* rhythm, first within the line, then in corresponding lines.

The distinction between loose and periodic style,[1] which the modern composition-books have run so tiresomely to death, and which is really a very unimportant technical detail, follows; and then we return to those Delilahs of the ancient rhetorician, Figures—Metaphor once more, Antithesis, Personification, Hyperbole, &c. Yet even this is more to our purpose than the demonstration that follows, showing that each kind of Rhetoric, judicial, deliberative, and declamatory, should have its particular style. And with this the handling of *lexis* proper closes, the rather brief remainder of the book being devoted partly to *taxis* (*ordonnance*, as Dryden would say), but with special reference to the needs of the pleader, and partly to a fresh handling of the old questions of enthymeme, the dispositions of the audience, and the like.

Loose and periodic style, &c.

It will be seen from this that the *Rhetoric*, like the *Poetics*, is invaluable to the historian of literary criticism, but that, in this case as in that, literary criticism was only partly the object in the writer's eye, while even so far as he had it before him, his views were very largely limited, and were even in some cases distorted, coloured, and positively spoilt by certain accidents of place, time, and circumstance. As our poetical criticism was injuriously affected by the non-existence of the novelist, so our prose criticism is injuriously affected by the omnipresence of the orator. As our Poetics were adulterated with ethic and other things, so our Rhetoric is warped by poetical, jurisprudential, and other preoccupations. In the first, poetry itself is not indeed itself a secondary consideration, but divers secondary considerations ride it, like a company of old men of the sea. In the second, prose as prose is merely and avowedly a secondary consideration: it is always in the main, and sometimes wholly, a mere necessary instrument of divers practical purposes.

General effect of the Rhetoric.

To supplement these two general treatises, we could wish for more particular applications, but we have not got them We have indeed some vestiges of work of the kind which are

[1] In the Greek εἰρομένη, "strung together," and κατεστραμμένη, "inter-twisted."

not altogether encouraging. M. Egger[1] has endeavoured to extract some references to literary criticism from the general *Problems;* but these deal at best with the remotest fringes of the topic—why melancholy is so often apparent in persons of genius, and the like,—questions indeed of the very first interest, but not of the kind which we are here pursuing. In the extant fragments, however, which belong or may have belonged to the lost *Homeric Problems*[2] (or *aporems* or *zetems*) we have metal more attractive. It may be said that the scholiasts, through whom we have most of these excerpts, were likely to select them according to the principles which, as we shall see,[3] governed themselves; but they do not all come through scholiasts, and yet the complexion of all is more or less uniform. It is that "ethical-dramatic" complexion, as we may call it, which we have noticed and shall notice as being the Greek critical "colour"—sometimes to the utter exclusion, and almost always to the effacement, of actual criticism. "Why did Agamemnon try experiments on the Greeks? Why did Odysseus take his coat off? Why is Menelaus represented as having no female companion? Why [a curial instance of that commentatorial *lues* which infects the greatest commentators as the least, the most ancient as the most modern] is Lampetie represented as carrying to the Sun the news of the slaughter of his oxen, when the Sun sees everything? Why did the poet make Paris a wretch who was not only beaten in duel, who not only ran away, but who was specially excited by love immediately afterwards?"

The Homeric Problems.

These are mainly moral questions; but the great philosopher appears to have carried his solicitude so far as to meddle with military matters. "Why [somebody had asked], in *Il.* iv. 67-69, are the cavalry represented as marshalled in front, the cowards in the middle, and the best infantry behind?" If Aristotle had heard of the "cavalry screen" he would no doubt have used this *lusis:* as it is, it appears, he suggested that *prota* means not "in front" but "on the wings." And there is all the quality which endeared Aristotle to the idler side (which

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 194 *sq.*

[2] *Aristotelis Fragmenta.* Ed. Valentine Rose, Leipsic, 1886. P. 120 *sq.*

[3] See below, p. 73 *sq.*

was not the only side by any means) of Scholasticism, in his condescension to the *aporia*—"If the gods drank nothing but nectar, why is Calypso spoken of as 'mixing' for Hermes? For any 'mixture,' even with water, is something different from nectar; and, therefore, as the gods do not drink their nectar neat, they do not drink that only." Quoth the great master (in reply, or at least "Schol. T." says so), "The word does not only mean to 'mix,' but also simply to 'pour,' and this is what Calypso did." But why should Calypso herself and Circe and Ino, alone of goddesses, have the epithet *αὐδήεσσα*? Even he could not answer that, and was driven ignominiously to suggest a change of reading.

It is not, I hope, necessary to say that I have no intention of raising an inept laugh at the Great One. As has been already said, the attitude of the Greeks to Homer was the attitude of a seventeenth-century Puritan to the English Scriptures. Every word, almost every letter, had its reason and its meaning—often many more than one—which had to be reverently sought out. The analogy, however, itself establishes and makes clear my point, which is to show that an attitude of this kind practically excludes pure literary criticism on the one hand, and is exceedingly unlikely on the other to be taken up by any one who is strongly bent towards such criticism. We know how Milton, who must have had an exquisite critical gusto originally, and who never wholly lost it, was by the cultivation of such an attitude so stunted and checked in his taste that he could throw the reading of Shakespeare in his dead king's face,[1] dismiss the delightful work (hardly inferior to the best of his own) of the Cavalier poets as "vulgar amorism" and "trencher fury," and even when he was not thinking of matter, sink all critical perspective in his blind craze against rhyme itself. The Homer-worship of the Greeks on the one hand, and their philosophical preoccupations on the other, had almost unavoidably a similar effect, though not so bad a one.

Yet the value of the two main documents is so inestimable,

[1] I have, I think, seen protests against this statement. The protesters either do not know Milton's text, or are of that foolish order of worshippers which simply shuts its eyes to disagreeable "nævea" in the idol.

Value of the two main treatises.

that if the incompleteness and the shortcomings of the *Poetics*, the unavoidable irrelevance of much of the *Rhetoric*, were far greater than they are, our gratitude for both would still be hard to exaggerate. We have here not merely the first constituting documents, the earliest charters at once and discussions of European criticism, but we have them from the hand of a master whose very weaknesses make him, as compared with some other masters, specially fit for the office of critic. For the magnificent but almost always *a priori* and unpractical metaphysics of Plato, for the shrewd but personal and rather unfair polemic of Aristophanes, we have a patient examination of a subject in itself so rich and varied, that one regrets having to point out that its riches and its variety are not quite exhaustive. Nowhere, perhaps, does Aristotle sketch the actual *Wesen* of the man of letters with the dæmonic completeness of the author of the extraordinary passage attributed to Simylus and quoted formerly; but that might be, and probably is, a mere flash. His own conclusions, only sometimes inadequate, very seldom positively erroneous, exhibit the true modes of criticism as perhaps they have never been exhibited since—with an equal combination of patience and of power. It is impossible for Aristotle to do harm, unless his principles are not merely taken too literally, but augmented and falsified, as was done by the "classical" criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is impossible for any one who undertakes the office of a critic to omit the study of him without very great harm. Let us first review briefly what seem to be the shortcomings, accidental or essential, of his performance, and then set down what its better parts establish for us as the state of Literary Criticism at the close of the first and greatest age of Greek literature, at the close of the first age of the literature of Europe as a whole.

Defects and drawbacks in the Poetics.

Partly by mere induction from actual Greek practice, and partly no doubt also as a genuine result of Greek taste and literary philosophy, we find the importance and the character of certain kinds of literature treated with some extravagance. The importance of Tragedy (as we are enabled to see clearly by the invaluable

though rather unfair aid of the historic estimate) is altogether exaggerated. It never, as a matter of fact, has held anything like the position here assigned to it, save twice in two thousand years and more, on each occasion for a generation or two only. And there is no reason, in the order and logic of thought, why it should hold such a position. It is again clearly evident (though we owe the clearness again not to our own wits, but to time and chance) that part of this importance is attained by an illegitimate sacrifice, or an accidental ignoring, of the just claims of other branches of literature—by making lyric a mere playhouse handmaid, by converting the stage into a pulpit, and by blocking out, not merely the existence, but the very possibility, of the prose novel. We can see further that the glorious achievements of the three great tragedians whom we in part possess, and of others, probably not much inferior, whom we have almost wholly lost, seduced their critic into taking what he found in them too hastily for what ought to be found in all —induced him (aided no doubt by the Greek taste generally) to exalt Plot, to depress Character, to put quite undue stress on artificial Unity. Lastly (to keep to the *Poetics*), we perceive a most unfortunate, though by no means inexplicable, tendency to give insufficient weight to Metre, and a decided inclination, on the one hand not to give quite enough importance to Diction, and on the other to lay down arbitrary rules about it.

And in the Rhetoric.

Something of the same general tendency manifests itself in the *Rhetoric*, reinforced by the necessary results of the Persuasion-theory, and the inordinate importance given to Oratory. With every possible allowance for the undoubtedly true plea that Aristotle had no intention of writing a treatise on Prose Composition generally, but only one on such Prose Composition as suited the purposes of the Orator, we can see that if he had written *Prosaics*, to match the *Poetics*, the same limitations would have appeared. He cannot free himself from the notion that there is, after all, something derogatory in paying great attention to style: and it is clear that he does not *wish* to consider a piece of prose as a work of art destined, first of all, if not finally, to fulfil its own laws on the one hand, and to give pleasure on the other. The salutary

but easily exaggerated difference between prose and poetic style is actually exaggerated here. Above all, the germ of mischief, if not exactly the mischief itself, is clearly discernible in his account of the Figures of Speech. It was the drawback, not merely (as is sometimes said unjustly) of the Platonic philosophy only, but of all Greek philosophy, to "multiply entities" —to take for granted that because names are given to things, things must necessarily exist behind names. And so, instead of regarding these Figures as merely rather loose, sometimes not inconvenient, but in reality often superfluous, tickets for certain literary devices and characteristics, there grew up, if not in Aristotle himself, at any rate in his followers, a tendency to regard the Figures (which were soon enormously multiplied) as drugs or simples, existing independently, acting automatically, and to be "thrown in," as the physician exhibits his pharmacopœia, to produce this or that effect.

But enough of this. It is the pleasanter, and, though not in kind, yet in degree, the more important, business of the historian, to call attention to the enormous positive advance which we make with these two books. It is almost the advance from chaos to cosmos; and we shall find nothing in all the rest of the history quite to match it, though the resurrection of Criticism with the revival of learning, and the reformation of it at the Romantic era, come nearest.

Merits of both.

In the first place, we find the great kinds of literature, if not finally and exhaustively, yet in nearly all their most important points, discerned, marked off, and as far as possible furnished with definitions. The most important of all demarcations, that between poetry and prose, is rather taken for granted than definitely argued out; but we see that, with whatever hesitations and reservations, it *is* taken for granted. So, too, with the kinds of poetry itself. If prose is inadequately treated, both in general and in its departments, we have been able to assign something like a reason for that; and a good deal is actually done in this direction. In other words, the field, the "claim," of literary criticism is pretty fairly pegged out.

In the second place, the only sound plan—that of taking actually accomplished works of art and endeavouring to ascertain

how it is that they give the artistic pleasure—is, with whatever falterings, pretty steadily pursued. The critic, as Simylus, Aristotle's own contemporary, has it, consistently endeavours to "grasp" his subject; and he does grasp it over and over again.

Let us review our positive gains from this grasp.

"*Imitation.*"

That the "Imitation" doctrine of the *Poetics* is in some respects disputable need not be denied; and that it lends itself rather easily to serious misconstruction is certain. But let us remember also that it is an attempt—probably the first attempt, and one which has not been much bettered in all the improvements upon it—to adjust those proportions of nature and art which actually do exist in poetry. For by Imitation, whatever Aristotle did mean exactly, he most certainly did *not* mean mere copying, mere tracing or plaster-of-Paris moulding from nature. It is not quite impossible that his at first sight puzzling objection to Alcidamas' use of the "mirror" as a description of the *Odyssey* had something to do with this.[1] A mirror, he would or might have said, reproduces passively, slavishly, and without selection or alteration: the artist selects, adapts, adjusts, and if necessary alters. Now this is the true doctrine, and all deviations from it, whether in the shape of realism, impressionism,[2] and the like, in the one direction, or of adherence to generalised convention on the other, have always led to mischief soon or late. The artist must be the mime, not the mirror: the reasonable, discreet, free-willed agent, not the passive medium. The single dictum that poetry does not necessarily deal with the actual but with the possible —that it is therefore "more philosophic," higher, more universal, than history, though it requires both extension and limitation, will put us more in the true critical position than any dictum that we find earlier, or (it may be very frankly added) than most that we shall find later.[3]

[1] It has been objected to this suggestion that the context does not favour it. Perhaps; but there is often a good deal working in an author's mind which the immediate context does not fully show.

[2] On Impressionism, see Index.

[3] And yet the "corruption" which dogs "the best" followed on this also. For it was on this dictum that false classicism based its doctrine that the poet ought not to count the streaks of the tulip—that he must conventionalise and be general.

So, too, the all-important law that the end of art is pleasure appears solidly laid down.[1] True, it is not laid down so explicitly as it is in the *Metaphysics* and the *Politics*, but it is assumed throughout, and such assumption is practically more valuable than argument. We have left behind us the noble wrongheadedness of the Platonic depreciation of pleasure; we are even past the stage when it might seem necessary to plead humbly and with bated breath for its *locus standi*. Moreover, the doctrine of the *oikeia hedone* not only by implication lays down the end of all art, but guards (in a fashion which should have been sovereign, though the haste and heedlessness of men have too often robbed it of its virtues) against one of the greatest dangers and mistakes of criticism in time to come. That what we have to demand of a work of literature is pleasure, and its own pleasure—how simple this seems, how much a matter of course! Alas! Aristotle himself is not entirely free from the charge of having sometimes overlooked it, while since his time the great majority of critical errors are traceable to this very overlooking. The obstinate ignoring or the captious depreciation of Latin literature by the later Greeks; the wooden "Arts of Poetry" of the Latins themselves; the scorn of Chaucer for "rim-ram-ruffing"; of the Renaissance for mediæval literature; of Du Bellay for Marot; of Harvey for the *Faerie Queene;* of Restoration criticism for the times before Mr Waller improved our numbers; of our Romantic critics for Dryden and Johnson; of Mr Matthew Arnold for French poetry,—all these things, and many others of the same class, come from the ignoring of the *oikeia hedone*, from the obstinate insistence that this thing shall be other than it is, that this poet shall be not himself but somebody else.

The end of art: the οἰκεῖα ἡδονή.

Again, whatever we may think of the relative importance assigned to plot and to character by Aristotle, as well as of not a few minor details of his theory of plot or action, there is no denying the huge lift given to the intelligent enjoyment of literature by the distinction of these two important elements, and by the analysis of action if not of

Theory of Action.

[1] See for this point especially Professor Butcher's chapter on this subject *op. cit.*, pp. 197-213.

character. With the aid of such refinements we cease, as Dryden has it, to "like grossly," to accept our pleasure without distinction of its gradations or inquiry into its source. The artist no longer aims in the dark; his processes are no longer mere rules—if rules at all—of thumb. And this is also the justification, though by no means the sole justification, of such minor matters as *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis*, as *desis* and *lusis*. True, there is here, as in the case of the Figures, a danger that a convenient designation *a posteriori* may be taken as a primæval and antecedent law. But this is the, in one sense, inevitable, in another very evitable and gratuitous, danger of all philosophical, scientific, and artistic inquiry. Fools can never be prevented from taking the means for the end, the ritual for the worship, the terminology for the spirit; but means and ritual and terminology are not the less good things for that.

and of ἁμαρτία.

Most of the points hitherto mentioned, though requiring, at the time and in the circumstances, immense pains, acuteness, and patience to discover and arrange them, are not beyond the reach of somewhat more than ordinary patience, acuteness, and pains. The theory of *ἁμαρτία*, as has been shown since by its triumphant justification in the other great tragedy—the tragedy which seems at first sight to flout Aristotle's rules—is a stroke of genius. To this day it has not been fully accepted; to this day persons, sometimes very far indeed from fools, persist in confusing the tragic with the merely painful, with the monstrous, with the sentimental, and so forth. Aristotle knew better, and has given here a touch of the really higher criticism—of that criticism which does not waste time over the subject as such, which does not potter overmuch about details of expression, but which goes to the root of the matter, to the causes of a certain pleasure indissolubly associated with literature, if not strictly literary.

Of Poetic Diction.

Nor, perhaps, ought we to be least grateful for the remarks on *lexis*—on poetic style proper. In details we may fail fully to understand them, or, understanding, may disagree with them; and there is no doubt that they are somewhat tinged with that superior view of style, as something a little irrelevant, a little vulgar, which appears more fully in

the *Rhetoric*, and which, while it has not entirely disappeared even at the present day, was naturally rife at a time fresh from the views, and still partly under the influence, of Socrates and Plato. Here once more we find those evidences of directness of grasp which are what we seek, especially in the main description of poetic style, as being on the one hand "clear," and yet on the other not "low," and in the further specification of the means by which these characteristics are to be secured. More particularly is this to be noticed in the indication of the *ξένον*—that is to say, the unfamiliar—as the means of avoiding "lowness." Here from the very outset we see that Aristotle (as Dante far later did, and as Wordsworth later again did *not*) recognised the necessity of "Poetic diction,"—the necessity, that is to say, of causing a slight shock, a slight surprise, in order to bring about the poetic pleasure. And by the example which he gives of heightening and lowering the effect alternately, by substituting different words in the same general context, we see how accurately he had divined the importance of this diction, whether we may or may not think that the fact is quite consistent with his exaggerated view of Action. Aristotle's verbal criticisms are never, as (to speak frankly) the verbal criticisms of the ancients too often are, mere *glossography*—mere dictionary work. They are invariably concerned with, and directed to, the literary value of the word, and that is what we have to look to.

The positive gains, of or from the *Rhetoric*, are less, but hardly less. It follows from the special limitations of the plan, which have already been dealt with, that we have no special theory of prose as such, and that, not merely some shortcomings, but some positive and mischievous delusions (such as the confusion of style with delivery), result from it. But, in divers casual animadversions, he shows us that if by good fortune he had given us *Prosaics*, the book would, though it were not more faultless than the *Poetics*, have been quite as valuable. And as it is, these things supply us with invaluable hints, glimpses, *points de repère*. The first, and not the least valuable, is the distinction, used also in the *Poetics*, but there only casually and in a glance, of words as *κύρια* and *ξένα*. Purity,

"Amplification," Propriety, while they at least suggest those dangers of misapprehended terminology which have been already dealt with, supply Criticism with those appropriate classifications, and that necessary plant, without which no art can exist. And the importance of the rhythm-section cannot be exaggerated.

Indeed I have sometimes thought that, without extreme arbitrariness or fancifulness, even the *Pistis* part of the Rhetoric may be made subservient to pure criticism. It is not so very far from the effect of persuading or convincing the hearer to that of producing on the reader the required effect—it may be of persuasion and conviction, it may be of information, or it may be simply of that subduing and charming which is the end and aim of the prose artist as such, whether his name be Burke or Scott, Browne or Arnold, and whether his nominal division of literature be history or fiction, criticism or philosophy, things human or things divine. The "Colours of Good and Evil," the tendencies of the readers, the fashions of the day and the passions of all days—these are things which beyond all dispute will very mightily affect the appreciation of a book, and which, it may be argued not quite improperly, condition, in no small degree likewise, its attainment of its object, its administration of its own pleasure.

However this may be, the point, already more than once touched upon, that we have now a Literary Criticism, regularly if not fully constituted, may be regarded as established without need of further exposition or argument. In some respects, indeed, we have got no further than Aristotle; we are still arguing on his positions, defending or attacking his theses. In others we have indeed got a good deal further, by virtue chiefly of the mere accretion of material and experience. We have, perhaps, learned (or some of us have) to resign ourselves rather more to the facts than he, with the enthusiasm of the first stage still hardly behind him, was able to do. We are less inclined to prescribe to the artist what he shall do, and more tempted to accept what the artist does, and see what it can teach as well as how it can please us. But in the wider sense of critical method we have not got so very far beyond him in

the poetical division. While if we have got beyond him in the direction of prose (as perhaps we have), the advance has been very late, and can hardly be said even now to have, by common consent and as a clear matter of fact, covered, occupied, and reduced to order the territory on to which it has pushed. Great as are Aristotle's claims in almost every department of human thought with which he meddles, it may be doubted whether in any he deserves a higher place than in this. He is the very Alexander of Criticism, and his conquests in this field, unlike those of his pupil in another, remain practically undestroyed, though not unextended, to the present day.

Note to p. 42.

Attempts have been made to confine Aristotle's slighting remarks on *lexis* to mere "delivery." It is true that in the whole passage there is a certain confusion of the different senses of "elocution." But in this sentence Aristotle has just said, τὸ περὶ τὴν λέξιν ποι ὑπόκρισιν—that is to say, has covered the entire ground which he is going to discuss. Even if φορτικὸν be violently restricted, by the help of καὶ before τό, to ὑποκριτική (which occurs further back), the general drift will remain.

CHAPTER IV.

GREEK CRITICISM AFTER ARISTOTLE. SCHOLASTIC AND MISCELLANEOUS.

DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICISM—THEOPHRASTUS AND OTHERS—CRITICISM OF THE LATER PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS: THE STOICS—THE EPICUREANS: PHILODEMUS—THE PYRRHONISTS: SEXTUS EMPIRICUS—THE ACADEMICS —THE NEO-PLATONISTS — PLOTINUS — PORPHYRY — RHETORICIANS AND GRAMMARIANS — RHETORIC EARLY STEREOTYPED — GRAMMATICAL AND SCHOLIASTIC CRITICISM—THE PERGAMENE AND ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOLS — THEIR FOUR MASTERS — THE SCHOLIASTS ON ARISTOPHANES — ON SOPHOCLES—ON HOMER—THE LITERARY EPIGRAMS OF THE ANTHOLOGY —THE RHETORIC OF THE SCHOOLS — ITS DOCUMENTS — THE 'PROGYMNASMATA' OF HERMOGENES — REMARKS ON THEM — APHTHONIUS — THEON — NICOLAUS — NICEPHORUS — MINORS — GENERAL REMARKS ON THE 'PROGYMNASMATA'— THE COMMENTARIES ON THEM — THE "ART" OF HERMOGENES—OTHER "ARTS," ETC.—TREATISES ON FIGURES—THE DEMETRIAN 'DE INTERPRETATIONE' — MENANDER ON EPIDEICTIC — OTHERS — THE 'RHETORIC' OR 'DE INVENTIONE' OF LONGINUS — SURVEY OF SCHOOL RHETORIC — THE PRACTICAL RHETORICIANS OR MASTERS OF EPIDEICTIC—DION CHRYSOSTOM—ARISTIDES OF SMYRNA— MAXIMUS TYRIUS—PHILOSTRATUS—LIBANIUS, THEMISTIUS, AND JULIAN.

THE two remarkable books which have been discussed at length in the foregoing chapter represent, no doubt, the highest condition, but certainly a condition, of Greek criticism in the second half of the fourth century before Christ. This criticism had not, indeed, yet assumed the position of a recognised art. It was at best a more or less dimly recognised function of Rhetoric, which on the one side was made to include a great deal which is not literary criticism at all, and on the other hand was made to exclude Poetics. But

Development of Criticism.

Rhetoric, from this time onwards, more and more tends to become the Art of Literary Criticism generally, and to absorb Poetics within itself. So that on the one hand we shall find, among the Latins, Quintilian, whose strict business is with the strictly oratorical side of prose rhetoric, dealing freely with poetry, and on the other, among the Greeks, Longinus (whose main subject is poetry), not hesitating to draw examples from prose. Nor may it be wrong to discern in this awkward separation of the two parts of criticism, and the yet more awkward adulteration of prose criticism with matters really foreign to it, an unconscious—nay, an unwilling—recognition of fact. For Poetry deals first of all with form, Prose with matter; though the matter can never be a matter of entire indifference to Poetry, and the form becomes of more and more importance as we ascend from the lower to the higher prose.

Theophrastus and others.

After Aristotle we fall back, for the ages immediately following, on the dreary and perilous chaos of fragments and titles. From the extant work, indeed, of his chief disciple, Theophrastus, we could guess that he dealt largely in Rhetoric. It is no rash conjecture that the famous *Characters* themselves were intended, after a fashion of which we have but too many other examples, to provide orators and writers with cut-and-dried types on which to base their rhetorical appeals. Nay, we have titles as well as fragments of works of his bearing on the subject,—*on Style, on Comedy,*—but nothing whereon to base a real estimate.[1] And what is true of Theophrastus is true of hundreds of others. Only those who are fond of the pastime of letting down buckets into empty wells can derive the slightest satisfaction from knowing, or at least being informed, that Aristotle of Cyrene wrote a *Poetic* of which we have nothing, and Phanias of Eresus a work *On Poets* of which we have a couple of scraps.[2] It is certain that a very considerable literature, at least osten-

[1] As in other cases, Theophrastus has been criticised very largely on rather slim vouchers. For instance, the quotation (in Cic. Orat., 39) on the strength of which Mr Nettleship, *Lectures and Essays*, ii. 47, speaks of him complimentarily, strikes me, I confess, as but a commonplace remark enough. It is that by Herodotus and Thucydides, "History was first stirred up to speak more freely and ornately."

[2] See for more, Egger, p. 347 *sq.*

sibly critical, existed, dating from the third and later centuries.

Criticism of the later Philosophical Schools

The Stoics

Two writers, later in time, not of much critical fertility but of some interest, will illustrate for us the attitude of two Greek philosophical schools to criticism None of these schools except the Peripatetics (and in a negative sort of way the Platonists) deserved very well of our Tenth Muse The Stoics—when they were not in that mood of disdainful tolerance which is represented by Epictetus' doctrine of "the Inn,"[1] of less tolerance still and more disdain as shown by Marcus Aurelius,[2] or of affected contempt, almost pure and simple, as in Seneca,[3] which was their later attitude—seem in their earlier days to have devoted themselves with great vigour to grammatical investigations, and at all times to have affected the allegorical style But we cannot wonder that they spent no pains on investigating, still less that they spent no pains on championing, that mixed intellectual and sensual pleasure which is the business and the glory of literature

The attitude, however, of their principal antagonists is all the more surprising The Cynic vulgarity and insolence could not be expected to busy itself profitably with letters, and, as we shall see shortly, the ancient Pyrrhonists have at least left us nothing to show that they could combine with their *Que sais je?* on philosophical points, the keen literary enjoyment and the discriminating literary appreciation of their great modern champion But the attitude of the Epicureans to literature is one of the most surprising things in the history of ancient philosophy.

One might have supposed, not merely that a Hedonist philosophy would apply itself most joyfully and energetically to the

[1] This doctrine, best known to English readers, perhaps, from Mr Arnold's not quite fair application of it to Théophile Gautier, is of much more general application in the original (*Enchiridion*, cap 52) Man being represented as a voyager to a far country, all occupations save duty and philosophy are really mere "inns on the journey," pleasant perhaps for a night, but not good to stay in "Eloquence" is specially dwelt on as one of these "inns"

[2] Who thanks Heaven (i. 17) that he did not make more progress in rhetoric and poetry

[3] *V infra*, bk ii. p 245 *sq*

investigation and the vindication of one of the greatest of all sources of *ataraxia* and *aponia*,[1] but that it would do so with all the more vigour as thus vindicating itself from the common charge of esteeming only sensual pleasures. Yet, though the scanty wreckage of original Epicurean writing warns us not to be too peremptory, there is absolutely no evidence that Epicurus, or any of his followers, took this side. Nay, the whole evidence available is distinctly against any such supposition. Perhaps we could have no stronger testimony to the reluctance with which antiquity took the view of literature as a pleasure-giver, or rather to the rarity with which such a view even presented itself. If we were here indulging further in speculation, it might not be improper to suggest that the atomic and necessitarian theory of Epicurus deprived the operations of the artist of half their interest. But this would be to travel out of bounds. It is enough to say that Epicurus is accused of slighting critical discussion altogether, that his chief disciple Metrodorus appears to have written a book on poetry which was a general attack on it as a useless and futile thing, and that the fragments of Philodemus of Gadara, which have been salvaged from Herculaneum, go to support the same idea.

The Epicureans: Philodemus.

At the same time, we must not lay too much stress on this. The charge against Epicurus and Metrodorus rests, mainly if not wholly, on the testimony of Plutarch, who, as we shall see, took the merely ethical view of literature, and is found in that treatise of the *Moralia* in which he sets himself to prove that Epicureanism cannot even give the pleasure at which it aims. And the tolerably abundant fragments of Philodemus[2] are, even after all the pains spent on them, in such a chaos that only extremely temerarious arguers will do more than take a vague inference from them. The remark which the latest editor of this puzzle has made about one book—"It is difficult to know whether Philodemus or his opponent is speaking"—applies, I should say, to almost all. Not only is this the case; but we can see, with hardly any danger of mistake, that

[1] Freedom from trouble and pain; the former, especially, being the technical term for the Epicurean *nonchalance*.

[2] Ed. Ludhaus. Leipsic, 1892.

if this difficulty were removed, and if we had the whole treatise fully and fairly written out before us, our state would be very little the more gracious. A very great, perhaps the greater, part of it seems to have been occupied with the discussion of one of those endless technical questions—"Is Rhetoric an *art* or is it not?"—in which antiquity seems to have taken an interest, the utter unintelligibility of which to us is only tempered by the wise reflection that plenty of our questions to-day will seem equally "ashes, cinders, dust" to students two thousand years hence. The real and solid conclusion is, once more, that we have not lost nearly so much as we seem to have lost by the disappearance of these endless treatises on rhetoric and on poetry. It is possible, of course, that one in a thousand of them might have been another Περὶ Ὕψους: it is far more probable that not one would have been anything of the kind.

The Pyrrhonists: Sextus Empiricus.

If Acatalepsy,[1] the doxy of the Pyrrhonists, has been somewhat more fortunate in one way than her close connection the Ataraxia of the Garden, she has paid for that fortune in another. Except in the magnificent poem of Lucretius, we have no complete document of Epicurean philosophy, and there the philosophy is utterly eclipsed, burnt up, washed away, by the blaze and the torrent of the poetry. No such disturbing element enters into the two very businesslike expositions of philosophic doubt which we possess in the *Pyrrhonic Sketches* and the *Against the Dogmatists* of Sextus Empiricus.[2] But, if the one writer is almost too much of a poet, the other is very much too little of a prose writer. Scepticism has assuredly no necessary connection with dulness, though it may have a good deal with levity. But Sextus Empiricus is one of the dullest writers of antiquity. There is not a spark, not a glimmer even, in his phrase, which is chiefly made up of the most damnable iteration of technical terms; his arrangement is desultory; and beyond a raking together of all the arguments, good, bad, and indifferent, for general or particular agnosticism, that he has read

[1] The incomprehensibleness of things; the impossibility of certain knowledge.
[2] Ed. Bekker. Berlin 1842

or can think of, he seems to find it impossible to go. At the same time, modern writers have found by no means a bad subject for such handling in the contradictions, the inconsistencies, the ineptitudes of literary critics: the eighteenth century especially, from the writings of the great Scriblerus to the *Pursuits of Literature*, is full of such things. And if there is little of the kind (for there is something) in Sextus, we may not improperly set it down to the fact that he found little to fasten upon.

What he gives is contained in three of the four last sections of *Against the Dogmatists*, those dealing with Grammarians, Rhetoricians, and Musicians respectively. In the last, which is the shortest, I do not know that the example of childish cavilling quoted by Egger—that a bard was set to look after Clytæmnestra, and Clytæmnestra murdered her husband—is more or less childish than the solemn sophism (not quoted by him) with which the chapter and the book closes, to the effect that as there is no "time"[1] in the wide sense, so there can be no "time"—feet, rhythms, measures—in the narrow.

The section on Rhetoric is also short, and turns almost wholly upon the old *aporia* whether Rhetoric is an art or not, with others of a similar kind.

As for the grammatical section, that does touch us nearer; indeed, when Sextus divides Grammar into two parts, adopting for the second the definition of Dionysius of Thrace, that "Grammar is the knowledge[2] of what is said by the poets and prose writers,"[3] we seem to be almost at home. But in this expectation we should be counting without our host, the sceptical physician, and, indeed, without antiquity generally. We have first quibbling *à perte de vue* about *empeiria*, then other definitions, then considerations of the mere grammatical elements. Only after a long time does Sextus come to the grammarian's business of *interpreting* the poets and prose writers. And then he not only seems to be dealing with men

[1] This is proved in the usual fallacy-fashion: Time must be past, present, or future. Admittedly, neither past nor future time *is;* present time is either divisible or indivisible, to each of which there is an objection.

[2] ἐμπειρία.

[3] συγγραφεῖς. The opposition is as old as Plato, though συγγραφεὺς is sometimes limited to "historian."

of straw, but answers them with, as Luther would say, a most "stramineous" argument. Poetry, it seems, they say (and it is fair to Sextus to admit that Plutarch and other people do in effect say this) is useful as containing wise saws and philosophical instances: grammar is necessary to understand poetry: therefore, grammar is good. He does not care actually to attack poetry, but observes that, in so far as it provides matter useful or necessary for life, it is always clear, and wants no grammatical exposition, while (662-663) whatsoever deals in unfamiliar stories, or is enigmatically expressed, is useless, so that grammar can do nothing useful with it. A subsequent contention, that grammarians know neither the matter nor the words of literature, though a little sweeping, might have chapter and verse given for it in the case of at least some critics. But when Sextus establishes his first point by triumphing over the poor grammarians for not having perceived in a Homeric epithet an allusion to a pharmaceutical property, and in Euripides a point of clinical practice (671), he is either making a heavy joke or is utterly off the critical standpoint.

A third school, in its various stages, has perhaps a better, if a vague, repute for attention to literature. Perverse as was in many respects the attitude of Plato to the subject in detail, it was impossible (or might have seemed impossible) that his doctrine of *psychagogia*,[1] and the magnificent eulogies bestowed in the *Ion* and the *Phædrus* on that poetry towards which he is elsewhere so severe, should not induce his followers—at whatever great a distance—to do likewise. It seems, however, to have been found easier by the earlier Academics to follow the crotchet than the enthusiasm, and many of the puerile and servile quibbles to which we have referred as appearing in Sextus Empiricus seem to be of Academic origin.

The Academics.

The Neo-Platonists, at least, might be looked to with some hope. Their spirit at any rate was not negative, and they seem,

[1] The "leading of the soul" to truths, and gifts, and pleasures. Aristotle likewise adopts the word: and indeed it contains in itself the soul of criticism, though in Plato himself it sometimes has an unfavourable meaning, of "allurement," "seduction."

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as a rule, to have been diligent and eager students of literature.

The Neo-Platonists.

But, on the other hand, their tendency towards mysticism, and also the strong colour which their philosophy took from the East, made them especially susceptible to the temptations of allegory, which, as we have seen and shall see, was a Delilah of criticism in almost all its stages in Greece. And when they escaped this they nearly always succumbed to the other temptations of merely grammatical and textual inquiries, or to those of an abstract and theoretical æstheticism, which leaves the actual estimation of literature as literature out of sight.

Plotinus.

Thus, from the two great chiefs of the school, Plotinus and Proclus, we have short treatises on the Beautiful—by Proclus in the form of a commentary (not complete) on the *First Alcibiades* of Plato, while the tractate of Plotinus[1] attaches itself somewhat less closely to the *Hippias*. From the very first this latter keeps rigidly and laboriously to the abstract. Beauty, we are told, specially affects the sense of sight, but the ear perceives it in eloquence, poetry, and music. It is also in emotions, in virtue, in science. Is all this derived from one principle or from many? What is it, or what are they? But as there is both essential and accidental beauty, we must first settle what the attractive principle is. A shrewd question, and one which, if followed out in the proper direction, would lead straight to the best criticism of literature; but, unluckily, Plotinus does not so follow it.

He proceeds to examine and expose the difficulties attending the proposition that beauty comes mainly or chiefly from proportion of parts. There must rather, he holds, be in the soul some faculty of perceiving the divine quality, whether manifested in proportion or in anything else. The beauty of bodily substances depends on their affinity with the divine: the beauty of things not recognised by the senses depends on their identity with it. In yet other words, and from a yet other point of view, Beauty

[1] *Enn.*, vi. 1. Separately printed with Proclus, in an edition which I have not seen, by Creuzer, in 1814. M. Théry included a French translation in the rather capriciously selected but interesting appendix of *pièces justificatives* appended to his *Histoire des Opinions;* and I believe there is another.

is Good, Ugliness is Evil: the attraction of the first pair, the repulsion of the second, easily explains itself.

As for the organ wherewith beauty is perceived, it is the soul: the senses only apprehend shadow-beauties—reflections and suggestions of reality. The faculty must be cultivated; it must be refined by high thinking and plain living, and at last it will see that, though Good and Beauty are one, yet Beauty is in a lower sphere than Good—is, in fact, but an imitation of it.

All this is not merely Platonic—it is itself beautiful and good: it is noble, it is true, it deserves everything that can possibly be said in its favour. But for the actual purposes of literary criticism it is but as a sweet song in a foreign language. It will hardly help us in the very least degree to distinguish Shelley from the most estimable of minor poets, or Thackeray from the least estimable of minor novelists. It does, by way of illustration, touch literary criticism once itself, for it refers to "the admirable allegory" which represents Ulysses as using all his efforts to withdraw himself from the enchantments of Circe and the passion of Calypso, resisting all the enticements of bodily beauty and delight. To the greatest as to the least of Neo-Platonists the allegorical explanation is itself Circe, itself Calypso; and instead of endeavouring to escape from it, he willing meets it willing, and abides contented in those ever-open arms.

This is especially seen in the writings, known or attributed, of the most industrious and variously accomplished, if not the most gifted, of the Neo-Platonists, Porphyry. Porphyry has to his credit two documents which, in title and subject, are undoubtedly literary, the *Quæstiones Homericæ* and the *De Antro Nympharum;* while some would take away from Plutarch, and give to him, the work on Homer's Life and Poems, which has undergone the indignity of being spoken of as "miserable" by M. Egger,[1] while, on the other hand, Archbishop Trench[2] gives the author, whoever he was, what would, if deserved, be the very high praise of having thus

Porphyry.

[1] *Op cit. plur*, p. 484.

[2] *Sacred Latin Poetry* (ed. 2, London, 1864), p. 30, *note.*

early "recognised very distinctly the charm which rhyme has for the ear." If this were so, I should be inclined to put him together with Philostratus, as having at least stumbled on a great critical truth. But perhaps the words will hardly bear the burden, for the writer, quoting *μελισσάων ἀδινάων ἐρχομενάων*, adds, "These words and their likes add much grace and pleasure to the expression." [1] And unluckily, the remark occurs only in an examination of Homer *by figures*, where this is taken as representing *homoeoteleuton*. Now, *homoeoteleuton*, though it is a sort of poor relation of rhyme, belongs to that branch of the family which more rightly bears the name of Jingle. However this may be, the treatise, as a whole, would scarcely add to the reputation either of Plutarch or of Porphyry.

The two more certain works, on the other hand, belong only to those outskirts of our subject which have been so often characterised. The *Questions* [2] busy themselves almost wholly with the text and the meaning, though it is fair to say that Porphyry is much above the usual scholiast in sense and judgment, and sometimes approaches criticism proper. This approach, however, is generally, if not always, displayed in the same direction as that of Aristotle's extant *Homeric Problems* (*v. supra*, p. 49 *sq.*) and of many of the remarks made by the Master in the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Poetics*—the direction, namely, of solving material *aporiæ*, such as Aristotle's own comment on *ζωρότερον κέραιε*, and Porphyry's [3] on the demurrer why Penelope did not send Telemachus for aid to her own parents? The process, in short, illustrates frequently, if not always, that curious *swerving* from the purely literary question which we so often notice. Almost any magnet is strong enough to draw the commentator away from that question. He will even ask, and gravely answer, the question, Why men, but not gods, are represented as washing their hands before dinner?

[1] *μάλιστα προστίθησι τῷ λόγῳ χάριν καὶ ἡδονήν.*

[2] Ed. Schrader, 2 vols., Leipsic, 1890.

[3] For this and the subsequent oddity see Schrader (*op. cit.*, *Ad Odysseam*), pp. 40-43. The subject is dealt with, from another point of view, in a monograph by M. Carroll, *Aristotle's Poetics in the Light of the Homeric Scholia*, Baltimore, 1895.

The *De Antro Nympharum*,[1] on the other hand, is the principal example, in intermediate times, of that allegorical interpretation or misinterpretation which, unless kept severely in order, is sure to usurp the place of the criticism to which it can at best be ancillary. From no other members of the school, so far as I know, have we anything that comes even as near to criticism as this.

But the Schools have led us far from our immediate context and subject, the literature of the three centuries after Aristotle.

Rhetoricians and Grammarians.

From all this literature it cannot be said that one single text, of undoubted genuineness and substantive importance, preserves for us the critical views of the something like three hundred years which passed between the philosopher's death in 322 B.C. and the flourishing of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the third decade before Christ. Two things, however, may be said to be, in a round and general manner, ascertained as having either taken definite form or come into existence during this time; and though both are conditioned very uncomfortably by our lack of texts, they are both of the utmost importance to the history of Criticism, and they can both be spoken of, with caution, indeed, but with some general induction not too far from certainty. The one is the establishment of the teaching of Rhetoric in a form which underwent no very important modification for five or six hundred years, and no absolute revolution for fifteen or sixteen hundred. The other is the birth of Verbal Criticism—of the kind of criticism which long arrogated to itself something like a primary title to the name, and has, in the same or other forms, not yet quite given up its pretensions—under the auspices of Aristarchus and the great Alexandrian school of commentators. The importance assigned to these can be justified from the fact, whether that fact be or be not in itself distasteful, that of such ancient criticism as remains to us, by far the larger part is

[1] My copy of this is the separate edition of Van Goens (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1765). It can hardly be necessary to say that the subject is the famous and beautiful opening of *Od.* xiii. As for the treatment—the cave, the double entrance, the nymphs, the vases, the bees, are all allegorised to the n^{th}, pressed to death, broken on the wheel, sublimated to a non-essence in the Neo-Platonic laboratory.

busied rather in these two directions than in that of Criticism proper. On the one hand, we have the huge body of work, not even so quite completely collected, which fills the seven thousand pages of Walz's *Rhetores Græci*, and the less voluminous thesaurus which does duty for Roman effort on the same lines. On the other, we have the body (whether as great or greater its more scattered condition does not permit one to say certainly) of Scholia. And we constantly find—to our grief—that the better writers (of whom, at least in some cases, something survives to us) are apt to stray, in one or other of these directions, from the proper path of that criticism which, though it does not neglect either Rhetorical method or verbal minuteness, yet busies itself mainly with far other questions, asking, "Is this writer or this work, on the whole, good or bad as work or writer?" "What variety of the poetical or prosaic pleasure does he or it give?" "What are the sources, so far as they are traceable, of this pleasure?" "What is the special idiosyncrasy of the author or the book?" "What place do both hold, in relation to other books or authors of the same or other times, in the same or other languages?" It will not be otiose if we attempt to sketch, from the extant examples, what the Rhetorician and the Scholiast, as a rule, actually did, what aim they seem to have set before them, what connection with the best literary criticism they seem to have had.

We need not very greatly disturb ourselves at the fact that, of complete Rhetorical treatises, we have probably nothing between Aristotle and Dionysius, if even that attributed to the latter be genuine; and that modern investigations refuse indorsement to the genuineness of the *De Interpretatione* attributed to Demetrius Phalereus,[1] which would, if it were genuine, be the oldest we have. For, from myriad petty indications, there is no reasonable reason for believing that a genuine *Rhetoric* by Demetrius would be very different from that which is now attributed to some later Alexandrian writer. Rhetoric, as we have seen, had from the first been hampered by special attributions and limitations; nor (as so often happens in history) did these limitations cease, at any rate to some ex-

[1] *V. infra*, p. 103.

tent, to work when their causes ceased to exist. The sentry in St James's Park, who continued to be posted till the other day at the garden-door of a certain house, because (as it was found out long after the reason had been forgotten) some Royal or Ambassadorial personage had been quartered there for a time generations earlier, was a great and admirable allegory—and in wiser days than our own would have remained undisturbed as such. Moreover, though the political importance of Rhetoric decreased, and the assemblies of Greece became mere parish councils; though the law courts went more and more either by fixed codes or personal influence; though philosophy became *phluaria;* Rhetoric, having once, with unconscious cunning, got Education practically into her hands, retained that powerful engine and all the influence that it confers. It would seem however that, pretty early, a very mischievous process of stereotyping took place. Grammar and Logic, the companions of Rhetoric, were to some extent saved by their having positive things to deal with—the facts of speech and the Laws of Thought. But Rhetoric dealt with fashion, opinion, etiquette: and except when, in the hands of superior persons like Dionysius and Longinus among the Greeks, like Quintilian among the Latins, it shook itself free and became the Literary Criticism that it ought to be, it became a rather parlous thing. It early developed the disease of technical jargon, in that specially dangerous form—recognisable perhaps in times nearer our own than those of Demetrius or even of Hermogenes—the form of giving wantonly new meanings to common words. It elaborated an arbitrary and baneful system of "common form"—of schemes, and types, and conventional schedules, into which, by a minimum of intellectual exertion, the orator or writer could throw what he wanted. On the one hand, it constantly increased and multiplied the Figures; on the other hand, it invented a system of things called *staseis*—"states of the case"—which attempted to classify and stereotype the matter of the orator's brief, just as the Figures classified and stereotyped his oratorical means of dealing with it. In other words, and to adopt the terms of literary criticism itself, the stop-watch ruled supreme. In the more technical examples of

Rhetoric early stereotyped.

Rhetorical art, such as those of the far later but characteristic Hermogenes, it is often difficult to find anything which touches literary criticism at all. Only the greater men, as has been said, were ever able to break free; and the sort of scorn with which they speak of their predecessors — Quintilian of the figure-mongers, Longinus of Cæcilius—is invaluable (especially as neither Quintilian nor Longinus seems to have been at all a bad-blooded person) as showing how irksome the traditional Rhetoric was felt to be by men who had in them the sense of literature.

Grammatical and Scholiastic criticism.

The Scholiast, on the other hand, if of a less traceable creation, is of almost equally old lineage, and he may conveniently be dealt with, in such detail and variety as he requires before the more formidable bulk of the School Rhetoricians occupies us. We have already seen, in glimpses, that the restless curiosity of the Greeks took very early to purely philological inquiry, to the separation and naming of parts of speech, to the codification of grammar. And it was impossible that a people furnished with such an admirable language and so early developing accomplishment, both in music and poetry, should not, at a stage proportionately much earlier than in other cases, discover and prosecute inquiries as to Prosody. To this day, Greek grammar is, to some tastes at any rate, the only grammar which is not too arbitrary or too jejune to excite any interest. The wonderful symmetry of Greek accidence, the mazy but by no means unplanned intricacy of Greek syntax, have had power to fascinate schoolboys who, both at that age and later, were merely bored by the arbitrary niceties of Latin, and refused to accept the attempts that have been made to impose an appearance of system on the antinomianism and the compromises of English. As for Greek metre, though the subject has not the historic interest—the interest of great yet not inexplicable changes—which belongs to the prosody of the two other languages just brought into comparison, it is capable of much more exact handling. And, in particular, the peculiar structure of Greek choric verse, that hitherto unparalleled blend which unites much of the liberty of prose with the ordered charm of poetry, gave practi-

cally endless occupation to intellects which would soon have been satiated with the comparative monotony of Latin, and which might have recoiled before the apparent lawlessness of English.

It is not very certain at what precise time these two studies (or, if we take prosody to be a part of grammar, this joint-study) began to occupy considerable numbers of professional students. But it must have been a tolerably early one, and by degrees the grammarian in his pure function, the scholiast in his applied one, became recognised personages.

The Pergamene and Alexandrian Schools.

The profession, so to speak, may be said (according to the common tradition, but with sufficient justice) to have been formally constituted in the third and second centuries before Christ, under the patronage of the successors of Alexander at the courts of Pergamus and Alexandria. To these schools belong the famous names of Zenodotus (the earliest, and belonging partly to the third century), of Crates of Mallos, and, above all, of Aristarchus. It is, perhaps, only at first sight surprising that, famous as the names are, they are for the most part names only. Not one single work, nor even any substantial passage of a work, by any of the three masters just mentioned, or by any of their contemporaries or near pupils, has come down to us, save in the case of one pupil of Zenodotus, more famous even than his master, the grammarian Aristophanes. Criticism indeed, it has been said, has, of all literature that is really literature, the most precarious existence. Still, we know a good deal about them from citations, allusions, and discussions in later writers, while of Aristophanes of Byzantium we have a fairly considerable collection of fragments.

The disappearance of texts, always lamentable, if not actually irremediable, is here more to be regretted than anywhere, because there is fair reason for believing that, at any rate, some of these grammarians were critics in the full and proper sense of the term. By far the greater part of their labours appears to have been directed to Homer, and there is no reason to contradict the general, the received, opinion that while the Pisistratean redaction is not quite certain in fact, and almost en-

tirely unknown in nature, while it is certain that even Aristotle had before him a text differing remarkably from our own, the Alexandrian grammarians practically produced that which we have. It is accordingly from this time that the famous and formidable craft—science it would no doubt call itself—of textual criticism may be said to date; and from our information, second-hand as it is, we are enabled to recognise some types of textual critics which are not, and are never likely to be, obsolete. In Aristophanes, the spelling reformer, the practical originator of accents, it is not rash to see the great exemplar of the critic of the purely philological kind, who busies himself with those literary matters which are most remote from literature proper, though no doubt he is a very valuable person when he is kept in his proper place. Zenodotus stands in the same relation to the lexicographical critic, and seems also to have been the father of all those who by "a critical text" mean a text arranged at their own discretion, passages being expunged, transposed, or corrected, not in accordance with any testimony as to what the author did write, but according to the critic's idea of what he ought to have written—in other words, what the critic himself would have liked him to write, or would, if he could, have written in his place. Aristarchus appears to have deserved the primacy generally accorded to him by being more wisely conservative than Zenodotus, and less tempted to stick in the letter than the lesser Aristophanes; as well as by a general display, in his more literary remarks, of critical faculty greater than was possessed by either, and infinitely greater than that of the average scholiast. While the still earlier, and at least equally famous or notorious, name of Zoilus is of itself sufficient to show that the critic who is merely or mainly a snarler can at least boast that he is of an ancient house.

Their Four Masters.

It would be rash to deny, and even unjust to doubt, that some of these famous critics, as well as others less known or not known at all, practised criticism in its best and widest sense, regulating texts by a sanely conservative acuteness, interpreting meanings and purpose with adaptable but not too fantastic compliance, annotating matter with intelligent eru-

dition, and even achieving, as best they could, the explanation of the nature and success of their author's literary appeal, and the placing of his work in the general map of literary history. Nay, there were actually, though our remains of them are but tantalising, literary historians of tolerably old date. But it is possibly neither presumptuous nor ungenerous to suspect that, if we had the whole works of Aristarchus before us, we should find in him (allowing for his grammatical tendency) at least as much shortcoming as we found, probably far more than we found, in Aristotle from the rhetorical side. For the old disability—the absence of comparison, the possession of not even a second literature for purposes of contrast—must have weighed upon Aristarchus just as it weighed upon Aristotle. And it is at any rate not uncharitable, it is merely a plain recognition of actual fact, to say that on the great mass of Greek grammatical criticism, as it comes down to us in the so-called scholiasts, the curse of the letter does undoubtedly rest. Nothing, for instance, is more curious than to read, from the critical point of view, the Scholia on Aristophanes,[1] some of which are undoubtedly among the oldest that we have on any author, except Homer. The commentators are irreproachable in noting the slightest grammatical peculiarity; they map out the metres with religious care. Difficulties of mere meaning they tackle with the same imperturbable seriousness, the same grave and chaste attention to duty, whether the *crux* is a recondite "excursion into the *blue*," or a mystery of the kitchen and the fishmarket, or a piece of legal technicality. They give careful and useful abstracts and arguments, dates now and then, sometimes not contemptible scraps of literary history. But of literary criticism proper, of appreciation of Aristophanes' ever fresh wit, of his astonishing intellectual alertness, of his wide knowledge, of his occasional bursts of magnificent poetry, there is not one word. You may spend hours, days, weeks almost over the

The Scholiasts on Aristophanes.

[1] I do not pretend to have extensively consulted or "compulsed" the learned and admirable labours of Mr Rutherford on this subject. But I have taken care to refresh and confirm old familiarity with Dindorf's edition by reading that of Dübner with the additions in the Didot collection.

huge collection; but the result will only be that, for this special purpose, page after page will be drawn blank.

But it may be said, "The scholia on Aristophanes are confessedly[1] poor in literary annotation. Why do you take them as an example? Why not take in preference, or give in addition, one at least of those collections of scholia which the same authorities[2] accept as richer in the matter?" Very well: let us take those on Sophocles,[3] the admittedly richest of all. It will—or certainly may—seem at the opening as if a more promising "pocket" had been struck, for the first annotation on the *Ajax* is busy with the arrangement and contents of the prologue, and its relation to what follows; and there is a good deal of similar matter throughout the commentary on this play at least. But when we come to read it in detail we find that its criticism is, at its widest departure from the mere explanatory *supellex* of the ordinary scholiast, almost purely *theatrical*. For instance, here is the note on 66: "The introduction of Ajax is persuasive; for thus the pathos of the tragedy becomes greater, the spectators perceiving him now out of his mind, and a little later in his senses."

On Sophocles.

And again on 112: "He speaks as in other respects yielding to the goddess but in this opposing her, and the poet hence shows his disposition to be haughty (since the spectators are much disposed in favour of Ajax by his misfortunes, and all but wroth with the poet), that Ajax may seem to suffer justly from his want of submission to the divinity."

We might quote the long and curious note on 134 as to the composition of the chorus from Salaminians; the criticism of the expostulation of the said chorus with the conduct of the Greeks to Ajax, 158; the still odder note on 201, as of one expounding to a very little school-child how Tecmessa and the Chorus exchange information; the formal explanation, on 342, why Teucer is introduced later than Tecmessa, and of the

[1] See the useful and interesting, if rather widely titled, paper of Ad. Trendelenburg, *Grammaticorum Græcorum De Arte Tragicâ Judiciorum Reliquiæ*. Bonn: 1867.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

[3] Ed. P. N. Papageorgius. Leipsic: 1888.

hero's language to his captive mistress; the rationale, 770, of the arrival of the messenger; the description of the scene at 815. But the mere enumeration of such things as these should, without the expenditure of more space, be sufficient to show what the character of this annotation is. It is not so very different in places from the elaborate stage directions with which, for the last century, some playwrights, especially German and Scandinavian, have been wont to assist the imagination of their readers or hearers, or their own dramatic incapacity; and even when it goes beyond this, it hardly ever goes further than the explanation and justification of the *action*.

The same is, I think, almost without exception the character of the relatively considerable number of observations of a critical kind which I have noted on other plays. Sometimes they are actual directions to the actor—who is told on *Electra* 823 that he "ought, at the moment of uttering the cry, to look up to heaven, and raise his hands"—sometimes, as on *Œdipus Tyrannus* 141, the note is made that "this will stir the theatre." But always, I think,—certainly in the vast majority of cases,—the critic abstains, with a rigidity which can only come from deliberate purpose (and this is unlikely), or from unconsciousness that the thing is likely to be required of him, from any comments on the beauty or appropriateness of the verse, on the idiosyncrasy of the phrase or its agreement with others, on the Sophoclean characteristics of the poetry, or even (except from the pure stage point of view) on the evolution of the characters He has evidently learnt his Aristotle, and looks at the action first: he has not learnt him with a sufficiently independent intelligence to remember that even Aristotle does not look at the action only.

On Homer.

But the case becomes strongest when we come to what should be the stronghold of literary criticism in this quarter—the Scholia[1] on Homer himself. Here we have the thrice—nay, thirty times—decocted essence of the critical study of generations, centuries, almost millennia (certainly more than one millennium), of study of the writer who entered into Greek life, Greek thought, Greek education, as no

[1] Ed. Dindorf and Maass. Oxford, 6 vols., 1855-88.

book, save the English Bible, has ever entered into the life, the thought, the education, of any other country. We have it in ample bulk, of all ages, presented in that special fashion of comment on comment, of annotated annotation, which, whatever may be its merits or whatever may be its drawbacks, is at any rate suited to draw out examination of the common subject from almost every point of view.

And what do we find in this? We find, of course, verbal explanation in floods, in oceans, sometimes of the most valueless, often of the most valuable kind. We find laborious comment on etymology (not quite so often valuable as eccentric), on grammar (invaluable often), on mythology, &c., &c., giving us what, whether it be artistically worthy or worthless, we often could not otherwise by any possibility know. We get the most painstaking, if not always the most illuminative or illuminated, discussions of the poet's meaning, handled simply, handled allegorically, handled "this way, that way, which way you please." Not seldom, as elsewhere (in Eustathius, for instance), we get certain references to Figures and the technical rules of Rhetoric, which touch the outer skirts, the fringes, of literary criticism itself. But of that criticism, as represented even in Dionysius, much more in Longinus, the allowance is astonishingly small. You may read page after page, volume after volume, and find absolutely nothing, or next to nothing, of the sort. Take, for instance, the two volumes of Scholia on the *Odyssey*, as published by Dindorf — on the *Odyssey*, the very touchstone of all Greek literature for literary criticism, and one which proves the gold in Longinus at the very moment that it shows what we may think not so golden in him. You turn and turn. Besides the matter classified above, a great many extremely valuable, or at worst more or less curious, thoughts meet you. You will be informed (on Od. ii. 99) that "It is natural to women to dislike the parents of their husbands"; on vi. 137, that "All youth is fearful because of its want of experience, but especially female youth." You will find examples of the puerile quibbling of Zoilus, such as that it was unlikely that exactly six sailors were taken from each ship; with the common-sense, if not much less puerile, retort that it is difficult

to get ἑβδομήκοντα δύο into verse. But such things are no great windfall; and such others as the observation, at 391 of the same book, on the poet's wonderful faculty and daring in making the sound suit the sense, and of showing in that sound "all the sorrow of the sight," are very rare. They still more rarely soar above observations on special points, or reach criticism of general handling of the relations of one part of the story to another, of its pervading poetical quality and charm. For one note, vol. i. p. 425, a little farther on, as to the variety and aptness of the Homeric compound epithets for beasts, we shall find pages and sheets of mere trifling. And when we get a more thoughtful examination (see, for instance, that given as apparently Porphyry's in the Appendix, ii. 789, on the conduct of Ulysses in selecting the persons to whom he shall first reveal himself), it strikes one at once that these, like the comments above cited on the *Ajax*, are comments on the *action*, on the dramatic structure, and not on the literary execution.

It is the same—it is perhaps even more the same—if we turn to the *Iliad*. The famous first words elicit naturally a good deal[1] of comment, which has some promise. Why did he begin with "wrath," which is an ill-sounding word? For two reasons. First, that he might purify the corresponding part of the souls of his readers by the passions, &c. Secondly, that he might give his "praises of the Greeks" greater verisimilitude. Besides, this was the practical subject with which he was first to deal as in a kind of tragic prologue. Then there is an odd gradation of the states of wrath itself, from ὀργὴ to μῆνις. Next, an inquiry why the poet begins with the end of the war, and so forth. This, of course, is literary criticism of a sort, but on thin and threadbare lines enough; and there is not very much even of this. The scholiasts are far more at home with accentuation and punctuation; with the endless question of *athetesis* (or blackmarking, as spurious); with such technical ticketings as at i. 366: "The trope is *anakephalaiosis*.[2] There are four kinds of narrative

[1] See Dindorf's collection, enlarged with variants at the beginning of vol. v. by Maass.

[2] *I.e.*, "recapitulation."

—homiletic, apangeltic, hypostatic,[1] and mixed"; or with such curiously unintelligent attempts to pin down poetic beauty as the note at i. 477 on ῥοδοδάκτυλος as a synecdoche, in which, by the way, even the colour-scheme seems to be misunderstood.

At the close of these remarks on the Scholiasts I must enter in a fresh form the *caveat* which has perhaps been wearisomely iterated, but which it is better to repeat too often than to suppress even in a single place where its omission might mislead. I am not finding fault with these laborious and invaluable persons for not doing what they had not the least intention to do. I am not (Heaven forbid!) arguing for any superiority in the modern critic over the ancient. I am only endeavouring to show that the subjects to which modern literary critics—who, as it seems to me, stick to their business most closely, and abstain most from metabasis εἰς ἄλλο γένος—pay most attention, were precisely those to which ancient critics, as a matter of fact, paid least. And this it is not only the right but the duty of the historian to point out.

The Literary Epigrams of the Anthology.

Nor will it, I trust, while we are thus examining Miscellanea, be considered frivolous or superfluous to examine that vast mass of information on Greek life and thought after the Golden Age which is called the *Greek Anthology*,[2] to see whether it can afford us any light. In this mass, with its thousands of articles ranging from exquisite to contemptible in actual literary quality, the range of subject is notoriously as wide as that of merit. The devotees of the Minor Muses of Hellas will "rhyme," as we should say, anything from a riddle and an arithmetical conundrum, to Myron's cow and the complimentary statues to the latest fashionable athlete. It would be odd, therefore, if books and authors escaped or were ignored, and they duly appear. In the battalions of *adespota*, besides a

[1] *I.e.*, "in the nature of conversational address, regular history, or argument." But it is often very difficult to translate these rhetorical terms exactly. *Hypostasis* in particular is even more elusive in rhetoric than in theology.

[2] I use the ed. of Jacobs, Leipsic, 1794, 10 vols. (nominally 3 vols. of Commentary, in 7 parts, 4 vols. of text, and 1 of Indices).

stray versification[1] of the rules for making iambics, and a wail[2] from some grammarian unnamed that he cannot write as well as Palladius or Palladas, we come to a considerable body[3] of literary epigrams arranged, by some one or other of the numerous ancient editors of the *Anthology*, in vaguely chronological order of subject. First, as in duty bound, come Linus and Orpheus, then a considerable batch on Homer, and then the long succession of poets and philosophers, dramatists and historians, to follow. For the most part, of course, the epigrams contain generalities and commonplaces, but with more or less of the neatness and prettiness that we associate with the very name of the *Anthology;* sometimes they go a little closer to the matter, as in the piece (523 of Jacobs) on Erinna's much-praised "Distaff." As we have only five[4] (and those not consecutive) out of the three hundred verses which this girl of nineteen years composed, it would be rash as well as unkind to question the judgment of the epigrammatist that they are "equal to Homer." But it may safely be said that the judgment itself is in a rudimentary style of criticism. It is natural, but rather "tell-tale," that the critic-poets always, when they can, take some non-literary point—Anacreon's fondness for wine, the equality in number of the Muses and the books of Herodotus, the supposed physical and moral shortcomings of Aristotle, and the like. But sometimes they go higher. There is plenty of spirit and sense in the epigram on Panætius for pronouncing the *Phædo* spurious,—as is well known, this idlest of critical debauches was at least as great a favourite with the ancients as with the moderns (548). Sometimes we get valuable testimony as to popular judgments — the unfeigned admiration which was felt for Menander, though the sounder critics might put him below Aristophanes; the mighty repute of Aristides of Smyrna (see p. 113) who is pretty certainly *not* the Aristides congratulated ironically in another epigram as never having less than seven auditors—the four walls of the room, and the three benches in it.

[1] Ep. Adesp., 454, ed. cit., Text, iv. 214.

[2] Ibid., Ep. 468, p. 218.

[3] Ibid., p. 221 *sq.*

[4] *V.* Bergk, *Poet. Lyr.*, iii. 143.

Perhaps Claudian is a little overparted with the "mind of Virgil and the Muse of Homer." But all decadences are given to exaggeration of this kind; and the reviews of the closing years of the nineteenth century in England will furnish much more extravagant instances of comparison.

The work of known, or at least named, individuals is less noteworthy in bulk, and not much more so in kind and degree. The right happy industry of Meleager appears to have helped in preserving for us no small proportion of the minor work of the great men of old. But his own quintessenced and not seldom charming pen is devoted to subjects always less solemn, and sometimes very much less worthy, than literature. These elders themselves (as indeed we should expect) meddle with literature but rarely; while their successors, the early Alexandrians, are less copious than we might have expected. Simmias of Thebes (perhaps not the same who outraged[1] the feelings of neo-classic critics, from Addison downwards, two thousand years later, by composing verse-eggs and -hatchets) has left us a couple of elegant and regular, though rather vague and slight, epigrams on Sophocles;[2] Philiscus of Miletus, who was at least old enough to be a pupil of Isocrates, a pompous eulogium of Lysias;[3] while no less a person than Thucydides has the credit of one[4] on the Third Tragedian, which if extravagant in tone is neat in expression. Of the compliments[5] to Aristophanes and Sappho, which are similarly attributed to Plato, the former, with its consecration of the soul of the great comic poet as the *temenos* of the Graces, is far the better. But the nearest approach to literature among the verses attributed to Plato's mightiest rival is a quaint bundle (no small one)[6] of epitaphs on the Homeric heroes. Of course these attributions are in all cases very doubtful, and possibly not in a single one correct; but the fact of them for literary history remains the same.

If we turn to others, we shall draw some of the most flourish-

[1] He is generally called Simmias the *Rhodian*. But some speak of the two as identical.

[2] Ibid., i. 100.

[3] Ibid., i. 101.

[4] Ibid., i. 102.

[5] Ibid., i. 102, 103.

[6] Ibid., i. 111-117. There are 48 of them. Aristotle had versatility enough to do them, but they do not *read* like him.

ing coverts in vain, but find something elsewhere Erycius of Cyzicus[1] has a spirited retort to an insulter of Homer, and a generous eulogium of Sophocles—it is noteworthy that these two most unite the Anthological, as the general, suffrage Palladas handles Homer's dealings with women,[2] elsewhere[3] jests ruefully about having to sell his books, even Callimachus and Pindar, and moralises[4] the story of Circe, rather stupidly, but in a fashion for which he might find only too many compurgators in antiquity Pollianus[5] rallies (not disagreeably) the stealers of Homeric tags and phrases, and a certain Cyrus accomplishes[6] a mild couplet to complete his own witty conceit of erecting a statue of Pindar at a bath The long and curious poem[7] of Christodorus Coptites on the statues in the Gymnasium of Zeuxippus naturally has a great many literary allusions Agathias—a somewhat major star than most of these, and one whose pursuits earned him the special surname of Scholasticus—has, so far as I remember, only two literary epigrams[8] on statues of Æsop and Plutarch Another "Scholasticus," scarcely distinguished more by the name of Thomas, announces that he has three "stars in rhetoric"—Demosthenes, Aristides, and Thucydides[9]—praising especially the pains of the first, but seeming actually to prefer the two latter Leon, the philosopher, has a little handful[10] of epigrams on books, chiefly of science and philosophy, and a Homeric cento not more respectable than such things usually are.

The great name of Theocritus is attached[11] to pieces, not inelegant but very distinctly *banal*, on Anacreon, Epicharmus, Archilochus, Hipponax, and that of the lesser Alcæus (not the great one of Mitylene, but the much lesser Messenian) to some praises of Homer,[12] of Hesiod,[13] and again of Hipponax. Dioscorides[14] extols Sappho, defends the much-injured Philænis against those who (to judge from confirmatory testimony to the same effect elsewhere) played upon her the same ignoble trick by which a certain Frenchman, in days nearer our own, tried

[1] Ibid., iii. 12.
[2] Ibid., iii. 117.
[3] Ibid., iii. 124.
[4] Ibid., iii. 137.
[5] Ibid. iii. 146.
[6] Ibid., iii. 160
[7] Ibid., iii. 161 177
[8] Ibid., iv. 16
[9] Ibid., iv. 95
[10] Ibid., iv. 97 100.
[11] i. 98
[12] i. 238
[13] i. 241
[14] i. 250 252.

to blast the fair fame of Luisa Sigea of Toledo. He is complimentarily orthodox as to Sophocles, but not much less complimentary to Sositheus, of whom we know little, and to Macho, of whom, thanks to Athenæus, we know that he exercised his wits upon putting naughty anecdotes into uncommonly pedestrian verse. An epigram of the Grammarian Crates[1] refers to the controversy on the respective merits of Chœrilus, Antimachus, and Homer, and would have been very welcome if it had given us some information on that matter; but as it is, the subject is a mere pretext to enable Crates to "talk greasily." Antipater of Sidon,[2] starting from the childish debate about the birthplace of Homer, turns it into something better by his conclusion—

> "Thy country is great Heaven: there was to thee
> No mortal mother, but Calliope";

and he subsequently celebrates Sappho, "Erinna of few verses," and Pindar, returning to the same subjects (except Erinna) in another batch, and adding a group on Anacreon (who, as fertile in commonplaces, is a favourite subject of the Anthologians), Stesichorus, and Ibycus.

At least three epigrams of a different sort rather make us regret that there are not more of the same kind, instead of the iteration of stock phrases. The first,[3] by Herodicus of Babylon, is a smart onslaught on the "fry of Aristarchus," the "monosyllabists" who care for nothing but ΣΦΙΝ and ΣΦΩιΝ and ΜΙΝ and ΝΙΝ. The second,[4] by Antiphanes, hails the "busybody race" of grammarians who "dig up the roots of other people's muses," with a great many more abusive but not quite inappropriate epithets and comparisons. The third,[5] by Philippus, is perhaps the best of the three, girding at the "whelps of Zenodotus" with a kind of combination of the other two, which is very likely actual and intentional. Philip (*v. infra*) was a careful student of the elders of his craft. Antipater of Thessalonica[6] has quite a group of literary epigrams. He celebrates the Nine Poetesses, takes part in the Antimachus-Homer

[1] ii. 3. [2] ii. 18, *sq.* [3] ii. 64. [4] ii. 189. [5] ii. 207. [6] ii. 101, 102.

debate, refusing the Colophonian primacy, but granting him second rank and the praise of rough vigour ("the Hammer on the anvil of the Pierides"), &c., and honours Aristophanes. Homer once more occupies Alpheus of Mitylene[1] and Antiphilus of Byzantium,[2] while Philippus of Thessalonica[3] devotes a "pretty but slim" comparison with flowers to the principal bards of the Anthology itself.

This same Philippus has also a not unhappy conceit[4] about Hipponax bidding the usual passer-by at his tomb "not wake the sleeping wasp, Whose shafts fly straight although his metres limp." A pale addition to the garland of Sophocles comes from the doubtless alien hand of Stratyllius Flaccus,[5] and Hesiod supplies only a play on words to the better artistry of Marcus Argentarius,[6] while the accident of our order of reading —a genuine accident—finishes a volume, and the tale, with the marvellously lame and only epigram of a certain Pinytus[7] on no less a person than Sappho.

A very thankless wretch would he be who was not grateful for any legitimate excuse to wander once more through the length and breadth of the enchanted gardens of the Anthology. But the reperusal can only strengthen the opinion already formed that on the actual "evaluation of π" in criticism the Greek mind, whether wisely or unwisely, was not strongly set. Nothing can be clearer than that the forms, the range, the etiquette, so to speak, of the compositions which are here grouped, invited criticism in the graver way as thorough as that which Ben Jonson gives to Shakespeare, Camden, and a dozen others; in the lighter as sharp, and at the same time as piercing, as that of Piron on La Chaussée. But it was not the mode, and they were not in the vein. With rare exceptions they obeyed the classical principle of taking the accepted, the obvious, the orthodox, and dressing it up in their best way. It by no means follows that they were not right; but it does follow that they leave us a little unsatisfied. To tell us that Homer is great, Sappho lofty, Sophocles perfect, Aristophanes witty, is (to use the old comparison of George Gascoigne) to

[1] ii. 116. [2] ii. 157. [3] ii. 194. [4] ii. 219. [5] ii. 240. [6] ii. 244. [7] ii. 264.

praise the "crystal eye" and the "cherry lip" of any gentlewoman. And so we may turn to the division of Greek literature most opposite to the Anthology itself.

The Rhetoric of the Schools.

Before considering in some, at least, representative detail the vast and arid province of the technical Greek Rhetoric, it may be well, or rather is absolutely necessary, to resume the consideration of what Rhetoric really meant. As we have seen, it was at the beginning a strictly practical Art of Persuasion by Oratory; and if it tended to embrace and absorb all or most other arts and sciences, this was partly because the orator would certainly have to deal with many, and might have to deal with all, of these, partly because it was always more or less a political art, an art of public business. For the Greek politician, like others, was expected to be a Jack-of-all-trades.

But even while this practical object continued, the Greek passion for abstracting and refining tended to turn practice into theory, while the Greek love of sport, competition, public display, tended further to turn this theory into the code of a very elaborate game. Obviously enough, as the practical importance of oratory declined, the technical and "sporting" interest of Rhetoric got more and more the upper hand. Rhetoricians specialised their terminology, multiplied their classifications, and drew their rules ever finer and finer, just as croquet-players narrow their hoops and bulge out their balls, just as whist-players split and wire-draw the broad general principles of the play of Deschapelles and Clay into "American leads," and an endless reverberation of "calls" and "echoes." We possess a very large, and a more curious than interesting, collection of the technical writings of this half craft, half sport, and a collection, rather less in proportion, but a little more interesting, of examples of the finished handiwork or game. To both of these we must now turn, premising that the technical part has not very much, and the finished examples surprisingly little, to furnish to the stricter literature of our subject. Why, then, do we deal with it? Because even abused Rhetoric is always Literary Criticism in a more or less degraded and disguised condition. The degradation can be remedied, the disguise thrown off, whenever the hour and the man arrive. Rhetoric, in

her worst moods, keeps the tools ready, keeps them almost too sharply ground, if she does not put them to the right use.

As Rhetoric preserved her authority not merely to the latest classical times but right through the Middle Ages, and even at the close of the latter escaped, at the cost only of some minor changes and additions, the decay which fell upon the rest of Scholastic learning, it is not surprising that the *Rhetores Græci* received early attention from the young art of Printing. Had not Aldus, in 1508-1509, collected them in two folio volumes, it is perhaps rather unlikely that we should have had any more modern collections at all. For technical Rhetoric fell into even more disfavour than Logic with the rise of physical science and materialist philosophy in the seventeenth century; and though, in some applied senses of the word, it has never fallen into complete disuse, it has never, as Logic has, recovered position in its stricter and more formal forms. It was therefore no small feat, even of German industry, when, some seventy years ago, Christian Walz of Tübingen undertook a new edition,[1] which, though some additions and improvements have since been made by Spengel[2] and others, remains the main standard and thesaurus. Its ten stout volumes, of some seven thousand closely printed pages, have probably been read through, and line by line, by hardly a single person for each decade of the seven during which it has been before the world. For not only is the bulk enormous, but the matter is extremely technical; there is endless repetition, commentaries on commentaries on commentaries forming no small part of the whole, while the minute definition and special terminology[3]

Its documents.

[1] 9 vols. (really 10, vol. vii. being in two large parts), Stuttgart, Tübingen, London and Paris, 1832-36.

[2] Spengel's handy collection (3 vols., 4 parts), which has now been for some years in process of re-editing in the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana* by Römer and Hammer, omits the scholia on Hermogenes, but includes divers all-important, if elsewhere accessible, texts, such as Aristotle and Longinus, and adds some minor things.

[3] It is not, I hope, illiberal to remark that our excellent "Liddell & Scott" is perhaps more to seek in rhetorical terminology than anywhere else. (At least it certainly was so up to the 7th or penultimate edition: I have not yet worked with that of 1896.) Ernesti's *Lexicon Technologiæ Græcorum Rhetoricæ* (Leipsic, 1795) is, for all its 105 years, still almost indispensable to the student, more so even than the corresponding and somewhat younger Latin volume (Leipsic, 1797). Even these fail sometimes.

require extremely careful reading. I shall not pretend to have read every word of it myself; but I have read a very great deal of it, and everything that follows can be guaranteed as drawn at first hand.

The original treatises of the collection form its smallest part, and none of them is very early; indeed, of the earlier formal Rhetoric, as has been said, Aristotle is almost our only representative, though, luckily, he is worth all the others. If the *περὶ ἑρμηνείας*, or *De Interpretatione*, which goes by the name of Demetrius, had been rightly referred (in accordance with nearly all the MSS., as far as the name goes, and with the assent of so distinguished and acute a scholar as Petrus Victorius in regard to the person) to Demetrius of Phalerus,—the Athenian statesman and orator of the latter half of the fourth century B.C., the antagonist of his namesake the City-Taker and lover of Lamia, the scholar of Theophrastus, the schoolfellow of Menander, the probable consulting founder of the Alexandrian library—its interest of authorship would be only inferior to that of the work of the greatest writers. But the allusions and citations in the treatise itself (unless we suppose it to have been edited and interpolated to an extent such as to make it useless as a document) are such as to put this attribution out of the question. And while Dionysius and others have been put forward as possible claimants, there seems no reason to doubt that the most probable author is to be found in some Alexandrian grammarian or sophist of the name of Demetrius (perhaps the one actually named by Diogenes Laertius as having written rhetorical treatises), who may have lived under the Antonines. There is, therefore, no reason for disturbing Walz's actual order.[1]

His first volume is composed of divers more or less original treatises, which are of the kind called *προγυμνάσματα*, "Preliminary Exercises," and which in most cases actually bear that title. The first is by the famous Hermogenes (*ob. c.* 170 A.D.),

[1] He does not give, but Spengel does, the *Rhetoric to Alexander* (*v. sup.*, p. 17 *note*), attributed to Anaximenes; and the same is the case with a short fragment, *Περὶ ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως*, which is an excursus on Arist., *Rhet.*, iii. 18. It is purely *barristerial*.

the Phœnix of rhetoricians pure and simple, who became a master at fifteen and an idiot at five-and-twenty, whose "heart was covered with hair," and whose works not only followed him, but were followed by libraries-full of scholiasts and commentators. The next, itself a sort of adaptation of Hermogenes, is by Aphthonius of Antioch, a teacher of the beginning of the fourth century A.D., who had the rather curious good fortune not merely to secure a long vogue in the late classical ages, but to be current in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Theon, an Alexandrian, but not the father of Hypatia, follows, with the less-known names of Nicolas, Nicephorus, Adrian, Severus, and the better known George Pachymeres, as well as another collection by an anonym. Of these, the works attributed to Adrian and Severus are not called *προγυμνάσματα*, but in the first case *μελέται*, in the second *διηγήματα καὶ ἠθοποιΐαι*.[1] The most famous and popular of the sets, those of Hermogenes and Aphthonius, are very short, and, like that of Georgius Pachymeres, do not exceed fifty pages. The others are longer, and in the case of the work of Nicolas, some three times as long.

The Progymnasmata *of Hermogenes.*

The opening of the Progymnasmata of Hermogenes is a curious and slightly bewildering mixture of definition, literary history, and the kind of "Manual for Young Writers" (*lege* orators), which, after long disuse, has recently begun to be prepared for the aspiring journalist. The first chapter is on Fables. They are supposed to be good things for the young. They have various authors and titles, but there is a tendency to give the name of Æsop to all of them. They are not true to fact; but should be plausible, and can be made so by suiting the action to the characters and making the peacock stand for beauty and vanity, the fox for wisdom, the ape for mimicry. Sometimes you should give them shortly, sometimes spin them out. (Example given.) You may put them in different places of your speech, and they will do instead of an actual example.

The second chapter is of Narration (*διήγημα*), which is dis-

[1] *Meletæ* are properly "complete declamations," not, as are the *Progymnasmata*, exercises in *parts* of oratory The others are some of these parts only.

tinguished from Fable as being the story of something which has either actually happened or is told as if it had. Homer and Herodotus are both "narrators." There are five kinds of it (one thinks of Polonius)—the directly declaratory, the indirectly ditto, the elenchtic, the loose, the periodic—with examples of each kind.[1] The first is good for story, the second for debate, "the elenchtic [confuting] is rather for elenchs," and the loose for epilogues, as being pathetic.

We might at very little expense of trouble, if at much of space, go through the whole of the little treatise and show how the hairy-hearted one of Tarsus deals in the same way with "Uses,"[2] Maxims, Refutation and Confirmation, Commonplace, Encomium, Comparison, Character-drawing,[3] Ecphrasis,[4] Thesis,[5] and Introduction. But the examples given will suffice. Each chapter consists of a definition, a division, sometimes very finely drawn, of kinds, examples, and generally a scrap of advice as to how, when, and where to introduce them.

Remarks on them.

The good and the evil of this kind of thing, as well as its special bearings on literary criticism, are not difficult to discern. It necessitates the narrowest and most accurate investigation of the kinds and characteristics of literature, of literary means, of "composition," in the wide and the narrow sense. It confers on apt students, besides the mere ability to play the special game of artificial oratory, a great acuteness of analysis. It entirely avoids, no doubt, the danger which is charged constantly, and sometimes not without a certain justice, on the more æsthetic kind of literary study and

[1] This is an early example of the confusion and cross-division which has infested formal Rhetoric to the present day. For the first three heads are purely material, the last two grammatical-formal; so that, instead of ranking side by side, *each* of 1, 2, 3 should rank under *each* of 4, 5. Cf. Professor Bain's *Rhetoric*, vol. i., where similar cross-division more than once occurs.

[2] χρεῖαι, rather "maxims" than "uses" in the theological sense. Hermogenes exhausts his special gift in distinguishing them from the more general maxim or γνώμη.

[3] The ἠθοποιία above referred to. It has a special reference to the drawing-up of speeches suitable to such and such a character in such and such a situation.

[4] Description of the graphic and picturesque kind.

[5] Subject or question in the wide sense.

literary criticism—the danger of desultory chatter. It has, in short, though to a less degree, the virtues of Formal Logic. And if the subject of Education, and fresh nostrums in it, were not a weariness to all intelligent mankind, one might say that not a few things in our present curricula might with advantage be excluded to make room for a course (with some due alterations) of Rhetoric according to Hermogenes. But, at the same time, its own shortcomings and its own dangers are equally obvious. The greatest of them—indeed one which in a manner swallows up and contains within itself all the others —is the almost irresistible temptation to regard literature as something according to scheme and schedule, something that the pocket ivory rule of the architect, and his neatly latticed paper, and a short handbook like this before us, will enable you to despatch and dispose of. Acute as are the divisions and definitions, they are dead things; and nothing that imitates and follows them can be really alive.

Aphthonius.

Aphthonius adopts the same divisions of Progymnasmata, save that he makes them fourteen instead of twelve, by separating ἀνασκευὴ [rebutting] from κατασκευὴ [confirming], and adding a section on Blame. His object was evidently to make even the business-like handling of his predecessor more precise still; and the long and revived popularity which, as has been said, he achieved, was not an undue reward for one of the most craftsmanlike crambooks that ever deserved the encomium of the epithet and the discredit of the noun. Aphthonius substitutes for the simple heading "Of Myth," &c., "*Definition* of Myth," &c.; and though he still keeps his sections very short, he manages, instead of the rather brachygraphic indication of examples in the text, to give an appendix of complete if miniature pattern at the end of each section—a fable of the ants and grasshoppers, urging youth to industry, for the first; the story of the rose and its acquiring redness from the blood of Aphrodite when she struck her foot against its thorns in trying to shield Adonis from Ares, for the second; and so on. In every respect, Aphthonius has studied clearness, and he has certainly achieved it. If it were not for the dangers of the whole

method, and especially that greatest one, of encouraging the mistake of classification for fact, terms for things, orderly reference to a schedule for æsthetic appreciation, he would deserve very hearty applause. And even as it is, one could, as has been said above, see the study which he facilitates substituted for any one of at least a dozen subjects of our modern overcrowded curriculum with a great deal of equanimity. Short as the piece is, some of the examples, such as the encomia of Thucydides and of Wisdom, are compositions of considerable finish. But it is significant that in the first there is, strictly speaking, no literary criticism at all, and that even the inevitable comparison with Herodotus is poorly shuffled off with the stock reproach that Herodotus writes to please, Thucydides to speak the truth.

Theon.

Theon, with greater space at his command, employs a different method. It is uncertain whether he preceded or followed Aphthonius; but the former theory is favoured by the fact that he, like Hermogenes, has twelve subjects only, those which Aphthonius put asunder being still united. He begins with a general disquisition on, and encomium of, the Progymnasmata, widening them somewhat, so as to bring in Figures to some extent, but also describing some of these as "contentious" or "disputed." Then he has a rather curious chapter, nearer to our special purpose than usual, showing how, not merely the great orators, but the great writers of old, used these forms, or rather things which can be brought under these forms, citing the famous speech of Sophocles as to his emancipation from love in the *Republic*, the fable of the flute-player in Herodotus, others in other historians, and a very great many more things, not a few of which are lost. This enumeration is not only interesting as pointing to these *desiderata*, but as showing how unhappy the Greek was unless he could arrange and classify and ticket, as well as distinguish and enjoy, the parts and characteristics of literature. The spirit is not dead yet: it has prompted a much-respected living author on Rhetoric to describe *In Memoriam* as "a combined Hyperbole of Affection and Sorrow." And this may undoubtedly be said in its

favour, that its exercise does really require and promote a certain intellectual alertness and activity. But the question is, Do this alertness and this activity exert themselves in actual progress, or in mere marking-time? Is the comprehension (one can hardly even ask Is the enjoyment) of *In Memoriam* furthered by its orderly arrangement in the case generally labelled "Hyperbole," and in the compartment labelled "Combined Hyperboles," and in the further pigeonhole labelled "Of Affection and Sorrow"? Is it really important to decide whether Sophocles's variation on "sour grapes" is a χρεία or an apophthegm, and which are the most remarkable examples of διήγημα in the orators and the historians respectively? Such things may appear to some specially and fatally to underlie the Platonic curse on the appearance of knowledge without the reality. But they have, as we see, very strong and long prescription, and there are still some who bitterly resent the exclusion of them from the teaching, not merely of technical Rhetoric, but of literature — who regard a system of "leaden rules," of individual appreciation without classes and compartments and indorsements, as dilettante, unscientific (which it would certainly allow itself to be), and effeminate. Between the two, opinion, a little assisted by Logic and History, must be left to decide.

Theon's handling of the Progymnasmata (which he often speaks of without the *pro*) is, as has been said, much fuller than those of Hermogenes and Aphthonius. He does not, like the latter of these, give a regular formal pattern of each kind; but he has a great many illustrative references to literature, and he has a good deal of discussion on what may be called the philosophy of the several kinds. Nor is it unnoteworthy that in dealing with Commonplace he drops the "common," substitutes *prosopopœia* for *ethopœia*, and introduces the curious new heading of "Law." On the whole, Theon is more "for thoughts" than either of his forerunners;[1] he might profit a clever boy more, and he has much more numerous and deeper glimmerings of insight into the purely critical side of the

[1] Speaking of Walz's order: I have little doubt myself that he preceded Aphthonius in time.

matter. But he lacks system, and this, in dealing with a subject which is systematic or nothing, is a drawback.

There was a rhetorical Nicolaus (indeed the name was very common) who was a student of Proclus; but the author of the *Progymnasmata* we possess seems to have flourished later, under the Emperor Leo and after him. For some reason or none, MSS. of him seem to be specially found at Oxford. They are merely examples, several of each kind, and sometimes minutely subdivided, there being, for instance, separate patterns of mixed, unmixed, logical, and practical "Use." They form, in fact, a curious bundle, and by no means a very small one, of partial declamations in common form, the examples of *Ethopœia* being especially remarkable: "What sort of things Niobe would say," "What Menœceus the patriotic suicide," "What Cassandra at the sight of the horse," &c. No less than fourteen in all are given.

Nicolaus.

This is also the principle of the *Progymnasmata* of Nicephorus Basilicus, a notary (not the son-in-law chronicled by Scott) of Alexius Comnenus, who gives no less than three-and-twenty Ethopœiæ on subjects Pagan and Christian. In fact, these two collections, which together fill some two hundred and fifty well-packed pages, may be regarded rather as rhetorical reading-books, designedly intended to possess a certain interest, than as anything else. Familiarity with them would be likely to produce much the same sort of literary facility, and in a sense "correctness," as that which we find in the minor French writers of the eighteenth century. It could, after mere childhood (when it might insensibly inculcate some good principles and some sound models), have little other good effect.

Nicephorus.

The few μελέται of Adrianus, the successor and funeral eulogist of Herodes Atticus, are whole declamations, not brought under any of the heads. The *Diegemata* and *Ethopœiæ* of Severus, after what has been said of these kinds, will need no special characterisation; and the *Progymnasmata* of George Pachymeres (who was nearly contemporary with Dante) and of the Anonymus are, like so many of the others, pure examples, indeed (as the former

Minors.

are well called in one MS.) *Meletæ* on the Progymnasmata themselves.

General remarks on the Progymnasmata.

No great resumption or amplification of the scattered comments already made on these works can be necessary. They form a by no means contemptible group of "Composition books," creditably distinguished from some more modern examples of the same kind by being busy with something better than mere grammar, but not as a rule showing any of that conception of style which is visible as early as Dionysius, distinct in Quintilian, and present in a form at once vigorous and exquisite in Longinus. They are by no means ill calculated to excite an interest in literature, and even to facilitate the production, in not contemptible form, of certain kinds of it. But there is upon all of them the curse of beginning at the wrong end—of constructing an elaborate skeleton system of forms, and kinds, and sub-kinds, and then classifying literature under these, instead of beginning with the literature, separating the good from the bad, and examining, as far as may be possible, the sources of goodness and badness. A man trained in them would have many advantages over our heaven-born, but hardly even earth-instructed, reviewers and students of literature. But he would be very apt to miss the finer touches, to lose the nobler gusts, of literature; and he would be especially disposed towards that worst disease of criticism, so often manifested in its history, which leads men to ignore, or even blaspheme, great work, because it refuses to be classified, or to obey the arbitrary rules which have been foisted into, or encrusted upon, the classification.

The Commentaries on them.

Not from such a point of view did the still later teachers, who set themselves to comment on the comment of Hermogenes and Aphthonius, regard their authorities. The second volume of Walz—a stout one of nearly seven hundred pages—is entirely occupied with scholia on Aphthonius alone, at the rate, that is to say, of about fourteen pages of margent to one of text. This flood of words about words has been too much for the patience even of the editor, who gives specimens only of some, and in just wrath labels one as "a futile opuscule botched together with utter

stupidity." Much, indeed, is of the usual kind which we associate with *scholia*—verbal interpretation, sometimes not useless, but as a rule singularly pedestrian and uninspired, introduced with a monotonous rattle of *clichés* and catchwords. But there are also better things, and the so-called "Homilies" of Doxopater, besides being of very considerable bulk (they fill some four hundred pages, not of mere scrappy annotation but of substantive commentary), attest the intelligence as well as the industry of their author, a Byzantine of the eleventh century. But they are (necessarily, no doubt) cribbed and cabined by the circumscriptions of their text.

The "Art" of Hermogenes.

In the third volume we return to comparatively original work, with Hermogenes once more at the head of the authors. We have left the vestibule—the Progymnasmata—and are now in the main courts of pure Rhetoric herself. Much more than half the volume is occupied by the four divisions of the master's *Technic:* the first of "*Staseis,*" the second, in four parts, of "Inventions," the third of "Ideas," and the fourth of "Cleverness[1] of Method." One synopsis of about a hundred pages, an anonymous epitome of fifty, with eleven shorter epitomes, and other tractates, scarcely averaging a dozen pages each, complete the volume.

There is no doubt that the manual of Hermogenes is the textbook of later Greek Rhetoric. Five mortal volumes of Walz, one of nearly nine hundred pages, are occupied by scholia upon it, two of these being devoted to the *Staseis* alone; and it seems to have been the model subject even of those who did not ostensibly range themselves as its commentators. The book of the *Staseis,* which produced fifteen hundred pages of extant and printed commentary, has itself but fifty or sixty, the great bulk of the treatise being contained under the heads of "Inventions" and "Ideas." There is a table of contents, but it may be feared that this will be of but partial service to any one not acquainted with the technicalities of the subject. Others may

[1] δεινὸς and δεινότης are good examples of the difficulty of getting exact English equivalents for Greek rhetorical terms. Some prefer "vehemence" or 'intensity," but neither of these will suit universally. The word seems to refer to the orator's power of suiting his method to his case, to alertness and fertility of resource.

indeed be relieved by the names of well known Greek orators and historians, who appear to be discussed under "Ideas," and even by those of some commonly known Figures in the last division. But on the whole Terminology revels in all her wildest Greek luxuriance Hypodiæresis and Prodiegesis guard the labyrinth with Antenclema and Procatastasis[1] ready at hand, more familiar words have obviously assumed new senses, and it is not even the very easiest thing to acquire a distinct and satisfactory idea of the connotation of the great section-headings themselves, while, when that idea is at last attained, we may find that it is for our special purpose irrelevant, or nearly so

The best instance stands, at the very threshold of the investigation, in the very name of those *Stasis* which, as we have seen, attracted the commentators as a candle does flies Στασις is a term which appears impossible to translate into any single English word, even in that legal vocabulary to which (far more than to anything having to do with literature) it really belongs Its Latin equivalent is *status* or *constitutio* [2] M Egger renders it in French as *état de cause*, Liddell and Scott do not attempt to render it at all, but it and its Latin equivalents have been variously translated as "state of the case," "issue' "point" Sometimes it seems as if it might be not impossibly translated "plea" Hermogenes (who plunges at once, after his fashion, into a wilderness of the most wiredrawn distinctions) gives no general definition, but says that στάσις ὁρικὴ is "the search for a name for a thing," and instances the case of a man who has stolen the private property of a priest Is this Sacrilege or Theft? The opening for hair splitting which such an inquiry gives is, of course, a very wide one, and Hermogenes simply revels in the indulgence thereof But for us

[1] "Distribution of the indictment', "preliminary statement', 'acknowledgment with justification', "introduction to narrative," are attempts at Englishings of these

[2] Quintilian adds *quæstio* and *quod in quæstione appareat* to these, and explains στασις itself as so called *vel ex eo quod ibi sit primus causa congressus vel quod in hoc causa consistat* The kinds and sub kinds of στασεις were luxuriously wallowed in and ὁρικη and στοχαστικη, *negotialis* and *comparativus*, with a dozen others, can be investigated by those who choose.

there is hardly a blade of pasture in the field on which centuries of commentators browsed so greedily.

Εὑρέσεις again may be "for thoughts." Again we can find no single word for them, how much less for such niceties as *procatastasis* and *prodiegesis?* The term covers the additions to the case introduced by the speaker's own invention, and ranges over a vast variety of subtleties, ending with a treatment of some Figures. The examination of "Ideas"[1] shifts to the qualities of the speech or speaker—clearness, purity, dignity, energy, brilliancy, and very many others, ending with that survey of great speakers and writers which has been noted. And finally the treatise on "Cleverness of method" contains, not only more figures, but a profusion of mostly brief and rather desultory cautions. Throughout the book the author seems in a sort of paroxysm of distinction and nomenclature: he is always striving to make out some one thing to be at least two things, and to fit each of the two with some technological form.

We turn, naturally enough, to the dealings with great writers mentioned above to see what this method, of analysis pushed to the verge of mania, will give us. They are very short—not in all filling twenty pages—and, as we might have expected, they contain little more than simple reference to the technicalities on which so much time has been spent. Literary criticism, in short, becomes a form of chemical analysis. We all know how this runs, as posted up, say, outside the walls of a pump-room. The water contains iron so many grains, sulphur so much, chlorine so much, nitrates a trace, and so forth. So here. Lysias has moderate *ἐπιμέλεια*, only a trace of *γοργότης*, a certain amount of *περιβολὴ κατ' ἔννοιαν*, but hardly any of it *κατὰ μέθοδον*, very little that is axiomatic, but a great deal of cleverness of method. On the other hand, Isæus has a great deal of *γοργότης*,[2] more abundant *ἐπιμέλεια*, and so with other

[1] In the sense, of course, of "kind," not of "notion." Indeed one Scholiast on Hermogenes defines it as *ποιότης λόγου τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις ἁρμόδιος προσώποις τε καὶ πράγμασιν.*

[2] Generally rendered "nervousness," though Ernesti prefers "celerity." *ἐπιμέλεια* is "diligent exactness"; *περιβολὴ κατ' ἔννοιαν*, "argumentative exaltation of the subject"; *ἀφελὴς* is "simple." By this time, and indeed long before, a regular cant of criticism had sprung up. Mr Nettleship once made a useful list of its terms (*v. infra*, bk. ii. p. 219).

things. He is not so good as Demosthenes (who, be it observed, is Hermogenes' ideal), but much better than Lysias, though he has not so much clearness of method, yet still a good deal. Of the historians, Xenophon is very particularly ἀφελής and also "sweet," &c., &c.

Perhaps the following sentence may serve as well as any other as an example of the method of Hermogenes. It is from the fourth chapter of the third book, περὶ εὑρέσεων:—

"Since many have set out many things about epicheiremes[1] and have spent much speech on this, and nobody has been able to bring it home to the mind clearly, I shall endeavour, as clearly as I can, to decide what is the invention of the epicheireme which constructs the *kephalaion* or the *lusis*, and what the invention of the *ergasia* which constructs the *epicheireme*, and what the invention of the enthymeme which constructs the *ergasia*." I quote this with none of that ignorant scorn of terminology, as such, which authorities so different as Hamilton and Mill have justly denounced in reference to the common eighteenth-century judgments of the schoolmen. But it will be obvious to anybody that this kind of writing tends to the construction of a sort of spider's web of words, the symmetry and exactness of construction whereof are in inverse ratio to substance and practical use. It may catch flies; it undoubtedly gives a sense of ingenuity and mastery to the spider. But it has extremely little sweetness: it rather obstructs the light: and it is not capable of being put (for it will not even staunch wounds) to any of those practical purposes which objects possessing very little sweetness, and no light at all, not unfrequently subserve.

Other "Arts," &c.

We shall still have something to say of Hermogenes when we come to the conclusion of this Rhetorical matter; but for the present it is necessary to pass on to the writers associated with him in this third volume of Walz. The *Art of Rhetoric* of Rufus, whose age and identity are quite unknown, is a very brief and rather slight skeleton, with classifications, definitions of terms, and a few examples. Per-

[1] A peculiar form of enthymeme, falling short of complete demonstration. ἐργασία is "handling" or "workmanship," with a special connotation.

haps the most interesting thing about it is the addition of a fourth kind—historic—to the usual three—forensic, and symbouleutic, and epideictic. The very common habit, to which reference has been already made, of taking examples almost indiscriminately from orators and historians, has evidently a logical connection (whether of cause or effect) with this. An anonymous "Synopsis" is busied with Hermogenes only. Joseph the Rhacendyte, who seems to have been a thirteenth-century man and a native of the "little isle" of Ithaca, is much fuller, has written an argument of his book in about 150 iambic trimeters, of a kind which would bring severe tribulation on the British schoolboy, and is noteworthy (though he would be more so if it were not for his late day) because he has evidently reached the stage where Rhetoric is recognised as the Art of Literature. His chapter-headings have the curious confusion and jumble which characterises much, if not most, Rhetoric since the strict oratorical side was lost sight of,—he has one on epistolary writing, one even on verse: and from several points of view his interest is not infinitesimal. It is very far from superfluous to note, though it may be impossible to discuss in detail, the significance of the fact that while another Anonym gives us four parts of a perfect speech—proem, *diegesis*, *agon*, and epilogue, a third notes *eight* parts of rhetorical speech — conception, style, figure, method, clause, composition, punctuation, and rhythm.

For, arbitrary and "cross," in the technical sense, as these divisions are (and as, it may be noted in passing, are all subsequent attempts to produce things of the same kind), they testify to a salutary sense of dissatisfaction. They make tacit or more than tacit acknowledgment that something must be put in the place of the old, defunct, purely oratorical Rhetoric—nay, that that Rhetoric itself was incomplete, and would have needed extension even if it had not been defunct of its old office. Of still further Anonyms one (only partly given in Walz) is interesting because it attempts a kind of historical introduction; another is couched in "political" (accent-scanned) verses, with curious refrains in the different sections, and with odd prose insertions, as are the acknowledged epitomes of

Tzetzes and Psellus. The remainder of the volume consists of a brief dictionary of figures, a treatise of some interest on "Rhetorical Metres" by a certain Castor, and a brief *ecthesis* or exposition of rhetoric generally.

The enormous collection of the scholia on Hermogenes fortunately requires no detailed notice.[1] At most could we pick out a few isolated passages bearing more or less directly on our subject, and even these would be of scarcely any value, seeing that the authorship and date of most of them are quite unknown, and that hardly any can be said to possess that intrinsic literary interest which might make questions of date and authorship unimportant.

The eighth and ninth volumes (really the ninth and tenth) present matter of more individual interest—the eighth because of the principal subject, which with comparatively little alteration is treated by a great number of authors, the ninth for other reasons. This subject—a subject which was to exercise a disastrous attraction on the Rhetoric of the Renaissance and even of later times—consists of the famous, or infamous, Figures.[2]

Treatises on Figures.

We know from a contemptuous phrase of Quintilian (see *post*) that long before his time the facility of compounds in Greek had induced the Greeks to multiply Figures beyond all sense and endurance. Yet as we have partly seen, in the so numerously attended school of Hermogenes, these famous playthings, though not exactly neglected, did not receive the first attention. Others, however, made up for any apparent neglect of them. We have, specially devoted to the subject, under the head of σχήματα or of τρόποι, some fifteen or sixteen treatises — some by named authors, others anonymous. The first, by a certain Alexander, divides Figures as usual into those of the meaning and those of the style, and enumerates twenty of the former and twenty-

[1] An exception, for reasons to be given later, will be made in favour of the work of John the Siceliote (see chap. vi. of this book, p. 187 *sq.*)

[2] About half of the eighth volume, however, is occupied by a long distribution of "questions" (ζητήματα) into heads, by one Sopater, who gives many specimen declarations. And it is followed by a short treatise, assigned to a certain Cyrus, on difference of *stasis*, and by a collection of problems for declamatory use.

seven of the latter; Phœbammon deals more shortly with a somewhat smaller number of figures, brought under more general heads; and Tiberius the rhetorician confines himself to the figures in Demosthenes. Herodian has a very large number of *poetical* examples—a device which, as we shall see, served to keep Rhetoric nearer and nearer to literature as time went on. The little treatise of Polybius of Sardis deals less with figures individually than with figurativeness; while an Anonymus, neglecting to some extent the usual phraseology, but reducing the usual procedure unawares to the absurd, manages to give a vast number by taking individual expressions from Homer and making a figure out of each. Zonæus follows more succinctly on the lines of Alexander; another Anonymus busies himself with Synecdoche only, and yet another adopts the dictionary arrangement, as do divers others with Tropes. One of the best pieces of the whole is the treatise of Georgius Choeroboscus, a writer of the fourth or fifth century. It is short, and deals with only a few figures; but these are the important ones, the definitions are mostly clear and sensible, and the examples, though not numerous, are well chosen.

The ninth volume opens with the not unimportant work to which reference has been made above, the *De Interpretatione* of Demetrius the Uncertain. But it also contains six other works on various divisions of Rhetoric, one of which is at least interesting for the great name of Longinus attached to it (as some would have it with greater certainty than in the case of the work that we would rather wish his), and others for other matter.

The Demetrian De Interpretatione.

Demetrius takes a somewhat independent view of his subject, which he puts on a level with Poetics, but does not call Rhetoric. As Poetry, he states, deals with — or at least is distinguished and divided by — metres (this *netteté* is refreshing, and we shall go farther to fare very often worse), so what are called clauses[1] divide and distinguish the interpretation of prose speech. Then, directing attention directly to clauses, he illustrates their kinds from the respective be-

[1] τὰ καλούμενα κῶλα.

ginnings of the histories of Hecatæus and the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, and prefers (though not to the exclusion of what he does *not* prefer) short clauses to long. From clauses he goes to periods, discussing and analysing their composition rather narrowly, and then returns to parallel clauses, whence striking off to *homœoteleuta* he continues his treatise under a great number of similar heads, betraying the slightly heterogeneous and higgledy-piggledy arrangement which, as we have said already, is so apt to beset these writers on Rhetoric. But he maintains throughout a creditable desire to identify his subject with the Art of Prose Composition, and not merely with Persuasion, or with the composition of an extremely artificial kind of prize essay on lines more artificial still.

Menander on Epideictic.

The rhetor Menander, who has left us a treatise on the third division of rhetorical speeches, Epideictic (generally subdivided into encomia and invectives), is thought to have lived at the end of the third century. From the first his treatment is of considerable literary interest, because he handles the sources of the material of these curiously artificial compositions. First, he takes the hymns about the gods, and here, according to the way of his class, he rushes at once into a classification. There are, it seems, nine kinds of hymns—Cletic, apopemptic,[1] physic, mythic, genealogical, artificial, prayerful, deprecating, and mixed—the appearance of which last heading, here and elsewhere, always makes one wonder how a person of any logical gifts could write it down without seeing that he made his whole classification ridiculous if not fraudulent thereby. Then he quotes a great number of authors, ranging them under the heads. A separate chapter is next given to each kind, still referring to many authors, but unluckily seldom or never citing the actual passages. Next he passes to the Praising of Cities, that very important part of the bread-study of the travelling rhetor, who had to make himself welcome by accommodating his lectures to local patriotism, as we see, for instance, in Dion Chrysostom (*v. infra*). Hardly in the whole of this dully fantastic division of literature shall we find anything quainter

[1] *I.e.*, "invocatory" and "dimissory or exorcising."

than the sections devoted to this subject. If the city is a landward one, you will point out how safe it is from piratical attacks; if it is on the coast, you will dwell on the splendours and advantages of the sea. "How to praise Harbours," "How to praise Gulfs," "What is the best fashion of encomium for an Acropolis?"—these actual headings meet us. At even fuller length the orator is told how to praise not merely the site but the population and its origin, the neighbours (perhaps dispraising them might come in best here), the customs, and so forth. In short the little treatise reminds one most of those modern cookery-books which—assuming the housewives who will read them to be of Paraguayan kin, and to continue idiots—give not only prescriptions for dishes but lists of dinners and rules of etiquette. One hardly wonders that a man like Lucian, of mother-wit compact to the finger-tips, should have soon left a profession in which the average practitioner seems to have been taken for granted as next door to a fool, without either common-sense or imagination enough to meet the most obvious requirements of his business.

Others.

One MS. of Menander stops here, but another gives us much more of the same kind, dealing with the βασιλικὸς λόγος—flattery of kings—with epithalamia, with consolations, *et cetera*. The general scheme is much the same, and at least does not disincline us to believe it from the same hand. The short treatise of Alexander on Rhetorical Starting-points is very technical and not very profitable; but it falls in with the Menandrine books in showing how this business of flattery—the reducing to system of the "dodges" of the auctioneer or the advertising agent—was, latterly at least, the mainstay of the rhetorician. The two books of Aristides' *Art of Rhetoric*, on the other hand busy themselves not with the epideictic but with the political speech, and deal chiefly with its technical qualities, our old friends. Apsines deals with the exordium only, and Minucianus with the epicheireme or imperfect rhetorical argument. Between them comes the treatise attributed to Longinus by some, and for that reason, if for no other, worth a little fuller examination.

"That,[1] so to speak, there is nothing better in man's possession than memory, who in his senses will deny? Some indeed praise Oblivion, as Euripides—

'O blessed forgetfulness of woes,'

as he calls it. But I should say that Lethe and the outgoing of memory help us little or nothing, hurt the best and greatest things of life, defraud and keep us short of happiness. For the most hateful of sins and crimes, ingratitude, we find oft occurring when memory's powers fail; but he who remembers benefits is neither ungrateful nor unjust. When men forget the laws and the doctrines that keep us straight, needs must they become poor creatures, and bad, and shameless. Yea, all folly and all inculture of soul occur through forgetfulness. But he who remembers best is chiefly wise."

This may not itself be the very crown of wisdom; it is not Plato; it is not even *Ecclesiasticus*. But it is at any rate the work of a man who can look a little beyond *stasis* and *diegema*. As if we were to have nothing certain from this great critic, the attribution of this treatise also to him is only based on a conjecture of Ruhnken's, itself depending on a citation by the commentator John of Sicily in the thirteenth century. It is devoted to the subject of Εὕρεσις — so badly translated by "Invention"—and it treats of its subject under the heads of *prosopopœia*, starting-points, elocutory mimicry, memory, topics drawn from things connected with the chief good, and passion. There is a fairly wide range of literary reference, though few citations are given at length. And it is only fair to bear in mind that even in the Περὶ Ὕψους, short and broken as it is, there are signs of a certain weakness for Figures and other technicalities, indications that in his more professional moments, and when inspiration deserted him, even the author of that wonderful little masterpiece might have approached (though he never could long have been satisfied with) the endless, the fruitless, the

The Rhetoric *or* De Inventione *of Longinus.*

[1] Walz, ix. 570. Aldine, p. 717, and at p. 100 of Egger's pocket edition of Longinus. Dickens was not much of a lover of the classics, but he would hardly have disdained this as a motto for *The Haunted Man*.

exasperating *distinguo* which seemed to be art, and wisdom, and taste, to Hermogenes and the rest. And though one cannot quite agree with Walz that there is in this *De Inventione* a "doctrine drawn from Homer and the poets, elegantly and equably disposed," yet one must admit that the handling shows something different from, and above, the heartbreaking jargon-mongering of the usual rhetorician. What follows is not the style of the Longinus that we know; it seems to come short of his manly sense almost as much as of his far-reaching flights of poetical appreciation. But it is a long way from the mere arrangement of compartments and ticket-boxes, and the mere indulgence in a kind of game of rhetorical "egg-hat" in and out of them when they are made.

Survey of School Rhetoric.

Enough, perhaps, has been said of the defects of this great mass of composition, both from the point of view of our special investigation and from more general ones. It remains to say something of its merits from the former. As will have been seen, the relations of the rhetoricians to literary criticism differ at first sight surprisingly—less so, perhaps, when they come to be examined. Sometimes the general literary view seems to be almost entirely lost in a wilderness of details and technicalities. But sometimes also the merely forensic tendency disappears, the merely technical one in the narrow sense effaces itself, and we have an almost pure treatise on Composition, limited it may be by arbitrary restrictions, conditioned by professional needs, but still Composition in general—that is to say, after a fashion, and in a manner, Literature. Every now and then, as we saw above, the writer rises to the conception of Rhetoric as Prosaics —as the other half of that Art of Literature of which Poetics is the one. And—a less good thing, but also not without its good side—we even find glimpses and glimmerings of the notion, to be taken up and widely developed later, of Rhetoric as *including* Poetics.

But the best and most important part of the matter has yet to be summarised. The technical study of Rhetoric, even when pushed to the extremities of the terminological and classifying mania, encouraged and almost necessitated constant overhauling

of actual literature for examples, and encouraged the characterisation of famous authors from this point of view. Even the orators by themselves formed no inconsiderable or undistinguished *corpus* of Greek prose literature. But, as we have seen, it was customary, even for very strict formalists, to include the historians whose connection with the orators was so close; and it was very difficult to exclude philosophical writers, especially Plato. A man must have been of preternatural stolidity if he could ransack Demosthenes and Isæus, Herodotus and Thucydides and Xenophon, Plato, and the school philosophers whom we have so freely lost, and if he did not in the process develop some notion of prose literary criticism at large, nay, formulate some rules of it. And, as we have also seen from the very first, poetry was by no means barred. The orator might very often quote it; he was constantly to go to it for suggestions of subject or treatment, beauties of style, examples of figure and form. Therefore, directly if not indirectly, the rhetorical teacher and the historical student accepted the whole of literature for their province.

The Practical Rhetoricians or Masters of Epideictic.

Of the actual *results* of this enormous period, the best part (even if we cut off the Dark Ages) of a thousand years of elaborate concentration upon an extremely artificial art, our remains are in proportion much less than we should expect; in fact, it is hardly too much to say that they are less than those of the technical books which taught how to produce them. It is scarcely fair to call Dionysius of Halicarnassus a rhetorician, though he sometimes goes near to being one. He is a serious teacher of Rhetoric, not a giver of displays in it, a real literary critic, a laborious historian. Plutarch is saved from inclusion in the class by the very same characteristic which interferes so sadly with his literary criticism as such. He is too practical, too keenly interested in life, too busy about the positive sciences of ethical and physical inquiry, to devote himself to rhetorical exercises of the pure declamatory kind. That Lucian did so devote himself for no inconsiderable time, we know from his own description of his breaking away from the Delilah Rhetoric; and there are scraps of purely or mainly

rhetorical matter in him even as it is. But though it be perfectly possible to serve two mistresses, no man ever could have, for his Queens of Brentford, Irony and the falser and more artificial kind of Rhetoric. The two are irreconcilable enemies: they would make their lover's life an impossible and maddening inconsistency. We must therefore look elsewhere, and in writers on the whole lesser, for the artificial Rhetorical composition which is of interest to us, not merely inasmuch as it sometimes deals with or comes near to literary criticism itself, but as it is, even on other occasions, a valuable and undeniable evidence as to the state of universal *crisis*, the condition of literary taste, at its time. We shall find such witnesses in Dion Chrysostom for the late first and early second century; in Aristides of Smyrna and Maximus Tyrius for the second exclusively; in Philostratus for the end of the second and the beginning of the third; while to these we may perhaps add Libanius and Themistius for the fourth, with the imperial rhetorician Julian to keep them company.

Dion Chrysostom.

Of these, Dion Chrysostom is not merely the earliest in date, but, on the whole, the most important to literature. He appears to have been a distinguished and rather fortunate example of a "gentleman of the press" (as we should now say) before the press existed. He travelled over great part of the Roman Empire in the pursuit of his profession as Lecturer—that perhaps comes nearest to it—and would appear to have been well rewarded. The description of his morning's employment, which begins his study of the three Poets' plays on *Philoctetes*,[1] is one of the most interesting passages in the later and less-known classics, and so is worth giving here, though it exists in at least one unlearned language: "I rose about the first hour of the day, both because I was poorly, and because the air was cooler at dawn, and more like autumn, though it was midsummer. I made my toilette, said my prayers, and then getting into my curricle, went several times round the Hippodrome, driving as easily and quietly as possible. Then I took a walk, rested shortly, bathed

[1] *Dion Chrys. Op.*, ed. Reiske (Leipsic, 1784), ii. 266. M. Egger (p. 441 *sq.*) has translated the whole Oration (p. 11), but by no means literally.

and anointed myself, and after eating a slight breakfast, took up some tragedies." The careful "study of the body," the quiet affluence of a well-to-do professional man, and the attention to professional work without any hurry or discomfort, are all well touched off here; and what follows gives us, as it happens, the closest approach to our subject proper to be found in the considerable collection of Dion's Orations, or, as they have been much more properly called, Essays. There are, however, others which are more characteristic of this division of literature, and we may deal with these first.

The whole conception of the kind of piece, of which Dion himself has left us some fourscore examples, is a curious, and to merely modern readers (nor perhaps to them only) something of a puzzling one. It is called an Oration because it was intended to be delivered by word of mouth; but it often, if not usually, has no other oratorical characteristic. The terms "lecture" and "essay" have also been applied to it incidentally above, and both have some, while neither has exact, application. Except that its subject is generally (not always) profane, it has strong points of resemblance to some kinds of Sermon. Classified by the subject, it presents at first sight features which look distinct enough, though perhaps the distinctness rather vanishes on examination. Not a few of the examples (and probably those which were more immediately profitable, though they could not be used so often) are what may be called local panegyrics, addresses to the citizens of Corinth, Tarsus, Borysthenes, New Ilium, in which their historical and literary associations are ingeniously worked in, and the importance of the community is more or less delicately "cracked up." Others are moral discourses on Vices and Virtues, others abstract discussions on politics, others of yet other sorts. But the point in which they all agree, the point which is their real characteristic, is that they are all rather displays of art, rather directly analogous to a musical "recital" or an entertainment of feats of strength and skill, than directed to any definite purpose of persuasion, or to the direct exposition of any subject. The object is to show how neatly the speaker can play the rhetorical game, how well he can do his theme. Each

is, in fact (what Thucydides so detested the idea of his history appearing to be), a distinct *agonisma*, a competitive display of cleverness and technical accomplishment.

Nothing perhaps is more tedious than a game that is out of fashion; and this game has been out of fashion for a very long time. Moreover, it has been out of fashion so long, and its vogue depended upon conditions now so entirely changed, that it is for us occasionally difficult, even by strong effort of mental projection into the past, to discover where the attraction can ever have lain. Equally good style (and Dion's is beyond question good) could surely have been expended on something less utterly arbitrary and unreal. Nor do these reflections present themselves more strongly anywhere than in regard to the pieces which touch more directly on our subject. Take, for instance, the Trojan oration, which has for its second title "That Troy was not captured." It is supposed to be addressed to the citizens of the New Ilium, and to clear away the reproach of the Old. The means taken to do this are mainly two. In the first place, the authority of an entirely unnamed Egyptian priest, the author of a book named unintelligibly, is invoked as giving the lie direct to Homer, and supporting himself on the documentary evidence of *stelæ*, which (unluckily) had perished. The second argument (obviously thought of most weight) is an elaborate examination of the Homeric narrative itself from the point of view of what seems probable, decent, and so forth to Dion the Golden-mouthed. Some of the objections are new; most of them very old. Is it likely that a lady who had the honour of being the bedfellow of Zeus would be doubtful of her beauty if an Idæan shepherd did not certify to it? Would a goddess have given such improper rewards to Paris, and put herself in such an ugly relation to Helen, who, by one story, was her sister? What a shocking thing that the poet should constantly speak well of Ulysses and yet represent him as a liar! How could Homer have had any knowledge of the language of the gods, or have seen through the cloud on Ida? And so forth, for some sixty mortal pages.

From such a procedure no literary criticism is to be expected; and, as has been said, the difficulty is to discern what was its

original attraction. As a serious composition it is clearly nowhere; as a *jeu d'esprit*, the rules of the game quite puzzle us, and the spirit seems utterly to have evaporated. The Olympic[1] "On the Idea of God" has been cited by some as a contribution to our subject, and certainly contains some remarks about Plato and about Myths—interesting remarks too. In substance it is a supposed discourse of Phidias to the assembled Greeks on the principles he had in mind in the conception of his statue of Zeus; but its most interesting passage is a comparison of poetry and sculpture. The mixture of dialects in Homer is compared to the making up of the palette and the use of "values" in painting; the selection of archaic words to the choice of the virtuoso lighting on an antique medal. The variety of epithet and synonym for the description of natural and other objects is contrasted with the restraint and simplicity of the sculptor's art. The passage is a really remarkable one, and stands almost alone, in elaboration if not in suggestion, as the forerunner of a kind of criticism, fruitful but rather dangerous, which has often been supposed to have originated with Winckelmann and Lessing and Diderot in the last century. But it stands almost alone.

The greater apparent promise of the paper on the synonymous plays is less well fulfilled. Dion seems to imply that this was the only instance where the Three competed on the very same subject, and he finds in the three pieces agreeable instances of the well-known general characteristics of their authors—the grandeur, simplicity, and audacity of Æschylus; the artifice, variety, rhetorical skill of Euripides; the mediocrity (in no evil sense) and the charm of Sophocles. He has also some interesting remarks on the chorus, together with some others less interesting, because more in the common style of ancient criticism, on impossibilities, improbabilities, breaches of usage and unity, and the like. Dion, in fact, goes so far as to express an indirect wish that the chorus were cut out of tragedy. He had, no doubt, lost the sense of the religious use which certainly existed in Æschylus, and perhaps survived in Sophocles; he could not but observe the combination of

[1] Orat. xii. Reiske, i. 370 *sq.*

nullity and superfluity (which may too often be detected even in these great poets) of the chorus, if regarded as anything else than an intercalated lyric of the most exquisite beauty, and he of course saw that the choruses of Euripides were often as merely *parabasic*, as entirely separated from all strict dramatic connection, as any address to the audience in Aristophanes himself

On the whole, it may best be said of the Golden-mouthed that in other circumstances, and if he had cared, he might have made a critic perhaps better than Dionysius, and perhaps not so very far below Longinus, but that, as a matter of fact, neither time, circumstances, nor personal disposition attracted him, save here and there, to the subject

There is another author, not far removed in age from Dion Chrysostom, whom I should be sorry to pass without at least as minute an examination Had we only the notices of him which exist, with a few fragments, there is perhaps no Greek writer from whom it would be reasonable to expect an abundance of literary criticism, of a type almost as startlingly modern as that of Longinus himself, with more confidence than that with which we might expect it from Aristides of Smyrna[1]

Aristides of Smyrna

Longinus has been blamed by M. Egger[2] for comparing[3] this rhetorician with Demosthenes But the excellent historian of Greek criticism must have forgotten the epigram, quoted

[1] One would not suppose that the later Greek rhetoricians were so fascinating as to be *introuvables*, but this is very nearly the case Aristides himself is very scarce and very dear Maximus Tyrius and Themistius refuse themselves to the seeker, except after long waiting, and as for Libanius, Messrs Parker of Oxford inform me that they have for years been vainly searching for a complete copy of Reiske's edition, while an incomplete one of which they knew was snapped up before I could get it I can only suppose that the editions which Reiske himself and Dindorf edited, at the end of the last century and early in this, were printed in small numbers, and have been gradually absorbed into public libraries In these latter I have never myself been able to work, except under compulsion, and then with no comfort Why Herr Teubner, the Providence of impulent or leisureless students, has been so slow to come to their help in these cases, I do not know

[2] P 481, *op cit*

[3] The reading in Long, Frag 1, is disputed, some suggesting *Hyperides*. But Sopater, in commenting on Aristides, attests the admiration of Longinus.

elsewhere,[1] in which Aristides is frankly ranked, not merely with Demosthenes but with Thucydides, as a writer, as well as the other testimonies, both of antiquity and of the Renaissance, which are conveniently collected in an article of Jebb's edition, to be found in that of Dindorf.[2] It is true that Dindorf himself speaks contemptuously of his client, but Dindorf was too deeply sworn a servant of strictly classical Greek to tolerate the pretensions of a *précieux* of the Antonine age. As a matter of fact, not only is Aristides a good, though by no means easy,[3] writer of Greek, but both the qualities and the defects of his writing and the causes of his difficulty are such as ought to have disposed him to literary criticism in the best sense. This hardness does not arise from irregular syntax, nor from any of the commoner causes of "obscurity." What makes it necessary to read him with no common care and attention is, in the first place, the cobweb-like subtlety, not to say tenuity and intricacy, of his thought; and, in the second, his use of not ostensibly strange or archaic language with the most elusive *nuances* of difference from its common employment.

Now these are characteristics which are by no means uncommonly found in persons and in times friendly to criticism. And the love of Aristides for literature (at least for the rhetorical side of it) is not only outspoken, but to all appearance unfeigned. His devotion is not merely valetudinarian, but voluntary. If there is a rhetorical extravagance in the phrase, there is a more than rhetorical sincerity in the sentiment of his declarations that, while others may find love or bathing or drinking or hunting sweet, speeches[4]

[1] *V. supra*, p. 82.

[2] 3 vols., Leipsic, 1829. The collection is at iii. 772. Although Dindorf says scornfully, *neque enim is scriptor est Aristides cui diutius quis immoretur*, would that all editors gave editions as well furnished!

[3] Any one who has experienced a humiliating sense of initial baffiement may be encouraged, as the present writer was, by the round declaration of such a scholar as Reiske, that of all the Greek he had ever read outside of the speeches of Thucydides, Aristides was the most difficult. Ed. cit., iii. 788.

[4] The excellent Canterus, who has strung these passages in his Prolegomena (iii. 779), would fain translate *οἱ λόγοι* "literature"; but it is pretty certain from the context that Aristides was thinking of rhetorical literature only.

are his sole delight: they absorb all his friendship and all his faculties; they are to him as parents and children, as business and pastime. It is about them that he invokes Aphrodite: he plays with them and works with them, rejoices in them, embraces them, knocks only at their doors. Elsewhere, "the whole gain and sum of life to man is oratorical occupation"; and elsewhere again, "I would rather have the gift of speech, with a modest and honourable life as man best may, than be Darius the son of Hystaspes two thousand times over: and everything seems to me little in comparison with this."

This is something like a "declaration."

Nor, on merely running down the list of the fairly voluminous extant works of Aristides (especially when the inner meanings, which do not always appear in the titles, are grasped), do matters look unpromising. The majority of the pieces are indeed pure epideictic — discourses to or about the gods, a mighty "Panathenaic" (the *chef d'œuvre*, with only one rival, of the author)— panegyrics of Smyrna, Rome, and other places, "Leuctrics" (*i.e.*, debating-society speeches, on the side of the Lacedæmonians, on the side of the Thebans, and neutral), arguments for and against sending assistance to the Athenian expedition at Syracuse, all the stock—a stock surprise to us—of this curious declamation-commonplace. But there are four pieces (between them making up the stuff of a good-sized volume) in which, from such a man, literary criticism might seem to be inevitable. They are the *περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν κωμῳδεῖν*[1] (a discourse whether comedy shall be permitted or not), the long Defence of Rhetoric (*περὶ ῥητορικῆς*)[2] against Plato's attacks, especially in the *Gorgias*, the very much longer and oddly named *ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων*,[3] an apology for Miltiades, Themistocles, Pericles, and Cimon, which completes this, and the still more oddly named *περὶ τοῦ παραφθέγματος*[4] ("Concerning my blunder"), which meets, with not a little tartness and wounded conceit, but with a great deal of ingenuity, the suggestion, through a third person, of some "d——d good-natured

[1] Ed. cit., i. 751.
[2] Ibid., ii. 1.
[3] Ibid., ii. 156-414.
[4] Ibid., ii. 491-542.

friend,"[1] that Aristides had committed a fault of taste by insinuating praises of himself in an address to the divinity. We turn to these, and we find as nearly as possible nothing critical. Glimmers of interest appear, as in the description of historians (ii. 513), as "those between poetry and rhetoric," but they are extinguished almost at once. It would be quite impossible to treat the comedy question from a less literary standpoint than that of Aristides; we might have Plutarch speaking, except that the writing is more "precious" and *point-de-vice*. The "Apology for my blunder" consists mainly in a string, by no means lacking in ingenuity, of citations from poets, orators, and others, in which they indulge, either for themselves or their personages, in strains somewhat self-laudatory. As for the more than four hundred pages of "On Rhetoric" and "For the Four," they also avoid the literary handling, the strictly critical grip of the subject, with a persistency which, as has been observed in other cases, is simply a mystery, unless we suppose that the writer was either laboriously shunning this, or quite unconscious of its possibility and promise. Pages after pages on the old *aporia* whether Rhetoric is an art or not, sheets after sheets on the welldoing of the Four, on Plato's evil-speaking, we have. But, unless I have missed it, never a passage on the magnificent literature with which Rhetoric has enriched Greece, on the more magnificent rhetoric which the accuser of the brethren has himself displayed in accusing her. To a man of the subtlety of Aristides, of his enthusiasm for literature, of his *flair* for a popular and striking paradox, one would imagine that this beating up of the enemy's quarters would be irresistibly tempting. But it is certainly not in his main attack: and though, in the vast stretch of wiredrawn argument and precious expression, one may have missed something, I do not think that it is even in the reserves or the parentheses.

There are perhaps few, at least among the less read Greek writers, who, in small compass and at no great expense of trouble, throw more negative light on Greek criticism than

[1] There is enough of the spirit of Sir Fretful in Aristides here to make the quotation irresistible.

Maximus Tyrius.[1] This rhetorician or philosopher (he would probably have disclaimed the first epithet and modestly demanded promotion to the second) has left us, in a style as easy as that of Aristides is difficult, and showing at least a strong velleity to be Platonic, some forty essays, or dissertations, or theses. They are on questions or propositions of the usual kind, as these: "Pleasure may be a good but is not a stable thing." "On Socratic Love" (an amiable but slightly ludicrous example of whitewashing everybody, from Socrates himself to Sappho). "On the God of Socrates and Plato," &c., &c. Several of them might, at any rate from the titles, seem to touch our subject; two at least might seem to be obliged to touch it. These are the Tenth (in Reiske's order), "Whether the poets or the philosophers have given the soundest ideas of the gods?" and the Twenty-third, "Whether Plato was right in banishing Homer from his Republic?" Yet, apt to slip between our fingers as we have found and shall find apparently critical theses of this sort, hardly one (at least outside Plutarch) is so utterly eel-like as those of Maximus of Tyre. As to the first,[2] he suggests that the very question is a misunderstanding—as no doubt it is, though not quite in his sense. Philosophy and poetry are really the same thing. Poetry is a philosophy, "senior in time, metrical in harmony, based on fiction as to its arguments." Philosophy is a poetry "renewed in youth, more lightly equipped in harmony, more certain in sense." They are, in short, as like as my fingers to my fingers, "and there are ænigmas in both." If you are wise you will interpret the poets allegorically, but go to the philosophers for clear statements. And we must allow, to the credit of the former, that there is no poet who talks such mischievous nonsense as Epicurus.

Maximus Tyrius.

This is all that, as a critic, Maximus has to say on this head; and though at least equally ingenious in evasion, he gives us nothing more solid in the debate on Homer and Plato.[3] He speaks, indeed, words of sense (by no means always kept in

[1] Ed. Reiske (after Davies and Markland), 2 vols. (or at least parts), Leipsic, 1774.

[2] Ed. cit., Part i. pp. 166-187.

[3] Ibid., Part i. pp. 437-452.

mind by critics) as to the absolute compatibility of admiration of Homer with admiration of Plato. But his argument for this, and at the same time the whole argument of the essay, is only a kind of "fetch." Homer was banished from the Platonic Republic not because Plato thought him bad *per se*, but because the special conditions of the Republic itself made Homer an inconvenient inmate. He was not qualified for admission to this particular club: that was all. Equally far from our orbit is a third essay, the Thirty-second,[1] the subject of which is, "Is there any definite philosophic opinion[2] in Homer?" Elsewhere Maximus has refused to include literary criticism where it might justly have been expected: here (with, it must be admitted, much countenance from persons in more recent times, and especially in the present day) he determines to import into literary criticism things which have no business there. He begins, indeed, with a hearty and not unhappy eulogy of Homer himself for his range of subject and knowledge: but the rest of the piece is little more than an application of the theory laid down earlier, that philosophers and poets are only the same people in different coats, of antique or modern cut as the case may be, dancing to different tunes, and gesticulating in a different way. It may be so; but whether it is or not, Maximus has nothing more to tell us in our own division.[3]

Philostratus.

There are not many positions in literary history more apparently covetable than that of being the first certain authority for a definition of Imagination which (in a sense different from Sir Thomas Browne's) "antiquates antiquity," which anticipates Shakespeare, which has been piously but vainly thought to have been first reached in criticism by Addison, and which, in its fulness, and as critically put, waited for the Germans of the late eighteenth century, if not for their greater scholar Coleridge, to display it in perfection. When it is added that this person was a professional

[1] Ibid., Part ii. pp. 115-136.

[2] Literally any *heresy*—αἵρεσις.

[3] The seeker will be even more disappointed if he follow up the quest to Diss. 37 (Part ii. p. 196): "Whether the liberal arts (ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα) contribute to virtue?" Only geometry and music, and mainly the latter, receive attention, though Rhetoric and Poetics are mentioned.

rhetorician, that he had sufficient original, or at least mimetic, skill to supply the pattern of

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,"

and of others of the prettiest if not the greatest things in literature, with sufficient appreciation of arts other than literature to have left us a capital collection of descriptions of painting,—it may seem that great, or at least interesting, literary criticism must have proceeded from him.

Yet whoso shall go to the work of Flavius Philostratus[1] in search of this will be wofully disappointed, unless (and perhaps even if) he have the wisdom necessary to the acceptance of what the gods provide, and the more or less resigned relinquishment of what they do not.

Philostratus is in fact a writer of considerable charm. The *Life of Apollonius* is readable, not only for its matter and its literary associations with Keats through Burton; and the smaller *Lives of the Sophists* are not unimportant for literary history. The *Eikones* are perhaps the best descriptions of pictures before Diderot,[2] and the *Letters* are really nectareous. Gifford, when deservedly trouncing Cumberland (*alias* Sir Fretful Plagiary) for finding fault with Jonson because he made up the exquisite poem above cited from Philostratus, would have done better to vindicate the original as well from Cumberland's bad taste and ignorance. "Despicable sophist," "obscure collection of love-letters," "parcel of unnatural, far-fetched conceits," "calculated to disgust a man of Jonson's classical taste," are expressions which, as Gifford broadly hints, probably express not so much Cumberland's own taste as that of his grandfather Bentley, who, if one of the greatest of scholars, was sometimes, if not always, one of the worst of literary critics. But Gifford, who, with all his acuteness, wit, and polemic power, represented too much the dregs of the neo-classic school on points of taste, was probably of no very different opinion. The fact is that, not merely in the

[1] Ed. Kayser. 2 vols., Leipsic, 1871.

[2] Achilles Tatius is later, and very likely imitated Philostratus. The two together perhaps give the best examples of *ecphrasis* (see Index).

passages which Ben has adapted, sometimes literally, for this marvellous cento, but in many others, the very wine, the very roses, of the luscious and florid school of poetical sentiment are given by Philostratus himself

But if they are his own, and not, as seems more likely, prose paraphrases of lost poems by some other, he was not one of the "poets who contain a critic." Not only does he put the remarkable definition[1] of *φαντασία*, which it is not clear that even Longinus fully grasped, in the mouth of Apollonius, but it is very noticeable that Apollonius is there speaking *not* of literary art, but of sculpture and painting In the description of paintings themselves there is no criticism And perhaps among the numerous examples which we have of the strange difference of view between the ancients and at least some of ourselves on the suggestiveness of literature, there is no passage more striking than the *Heroic Dialogue*[2] on the subject of Homer between a Phœnician stranger and a vine-dresser at Eleus in the Thracian Chersonese, where Protesilaus was supposed to be buried The stuff of this fantastic piece is the information, about the matters of the Trojan war, supposed to be supplied to the vine-dresser by Protesilaus himself. There is one passage of literary estimate of the ordinary kind, but the whole is one of those curious corrections of Homeric statement which served as the ancestors of the new and anti-Homeric "tale of Troy" in the Middle Ages, and which are among the numerous puzzles of ancient literature to us, until we have mastered the strange antique horror of fiction as fiction We cannot conceive any one—after childhood—otherwise than humorously attempting to make out that Sir Walter Scott did injustice to Waverley, and that in the duel with Balmawhapple

[1] *Vit Ap*, vi 19, ed cit, i 231 "Imagination, a wiser craftsmistress than Imitation, has done this, for Imitation will fashion what she sees, but Imagination what she has not seen, for she will *suppose* it according to the analogy of the real Moreover, sudden disturbance (*ἔκπληξις*) will put Imitation's hand out (*ἔκκρουει*), but not Imagination's, for she goes on undisturbed to what she herself hypothetically conceived" This is Shakespeare's Imagination, whereof the lunatic, the lover, and the poet are all compact, it is not Addison's, which deals only with things furnished by the sense of sight

Ed cit, ii 128 219 The piece is sometimes cited as "Heroica."

the Baron was only second, not principal, insinuating that the novelist has concealed the real secret of Flora's indifference to her lover, which was that she was determined, like Beatrix Esmond, to be the Chevalier's mistress, or declaring that Fergus, instead of being captured and executed, died gloriously in a skirmish omitted by historians, after putting the English to flight. But this is what the ancients were always doing with Homer; and it is scarcely too much to say that until this attitude of mind is entirely discarded, literary criticism in the proper sense is impossible.

Libanius.

The relatively considerable space, some six or seven pages, which is allotted to Libanius in Egger's book, may have encouraged readers to expect some considerable contribution to critical literature from that sophist and rhetorician. But a careful reading of the French historian's text will show that he has really nothing to produce to justify the space assigned: and an independent examination of Libanius himself (which, as hinted already, is not too easy to make[1]) will more than confirm this uncomfortable suspicion. Libanius is enormously copious, and he is not exactly contemptible,[2] seeing that he can apply the sort of "Wardour Street" Attic, in which he and the better class of his contemporaries wrote, to a large number of subjects with a great deal of skill. But the curse of artificiality is over everything that he writes:[3] and, to do him justice, his writings proclaim the fact beforehand with the most praiseworthy frankness. They belong almost entirely to those classes of conventional exercise of which full account has been given, and will be given, in the present Book and its successor. They are *Progymnasmata*, *Meletæ*, "ora-

[1] Besides the difficulty of obtaining Reiske's ed., there is the further one that it is not complete. The *Letters* have to be sought in that of Wolf (Amsterdam, 1738), which is neither in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, nor in that of the Faculty of Advocates, nor in that of the Signet, so that it had to be run to earth in the British Museum, though I have since found a copy for sale. And even this combination is, I think, not exhaustive. The *Progymnasmata*, *Meletæ*, *Dissertationes*, &c., were published by Claude Morel, Paris, 1606; and there are many other editions of parts, but none of the whole.

[2] See Photius on him, *infra*, p. 181.

[3] De Quincey's truculent attack on Greek rhetoricians generally (*Essay on Rhetoric: Works*, x. 31, 32) is less unjust to Libanius than to any one.

tions," that is to say, rather more practical compositions of the same class, ethical dissertations, letters of the kind in which A writes that B is a new Demosthenes, and B replies that A really is a second Plato. The Progymnasmata include all the kinds mentioned earlier in this chapter, fables and narrations, uses and sentences, encomia and ethopoiæ and the rest; the Meletæ range from the complaint of a parasite who has been done out of his dinner, through all manner of historical, mythical, and fantastic cases, to the question whether Lais (after being exiled) had not better be recalled as a useful member of society. But literary criticism is *nullibi*. If it were anywhere we should look for it in the comparison of Demosthenes and Æschines which figures among the *Progymnasmata*, in the *Life*[1] of the first-named orator and the arguments to his speeches, and perhaps in the *Apologia Socratis*. In the first there is not a *scintilla* of the kind: the comparison wholly concerns the lives, characters, and successes of the two. In the *Apologia* there is pretty constant reference to Socrates' conversation, with some to that of others, Prodicus, Protagoras, &c. But any literary consideration is avoided with that curious superciliousness, or more curious subterfuge, which we have noticed often already, and which is so rigid and so complete that it suggests malice prepense—a deliberate and perverse abstention. The "editorial" matter (to vary a happy phrase of M. Egger) on Demosthenes is even more surprisingly barren,—mere biography, and mere reference to the stock technicalities and classifications of *stasis* and the like, practically exhaust it. I do not know how far the fact that he composed, in answer to Aristides,[2] a defence of stage dancing or pantomime, may by some be reckoned to him as literary righteousness. In his wordy *Autobiography*[3] I can find nothing to our purpose: and though, in the difficulties of study of him referred to, I daresay I have not thoroughly sifted the huge haystack of the *Orations*, I think there is very little more there. The *For Aristophanes*[4] has nothing to do with the Aristo-

[1] For mere completeness' sake I may refer here to other scholiastic *Lives*, of which the best known perhaps is that of Thucydides by Marcellinus. I do not think it rash to say that they all more or less bear out the contention put above as to the *scholia* generally.

[2] Not to the piece mentioned above (p. 115), but to a lost *oration*. His own is at iii. 334 (Reiske).

[3] I. 1, Reiske.

[4] I. 442, Reiske.

phanes we know or with literature, except that it seems to have been the speech in which Julian (*v. infra*, p. 126) discovered such wonderful qualities.

The "Monody" and the "Funeral Oration" on Julian himself may again excite expectation, for the dead Emperor was certainly a man of letters; but they will equally disappoint it. The quaintly named "To Those Who Do Not Speak" (pupils of his who on growing up and entering the senate or other public bodies prove dumb dogs) might help us, but does not. Libanius merely exhorts these sluggards, in the most general way, to be good boys, to pay less attention to chariot-racing and more to books. By far the larger number of the "Orations" are on political or legal subjects, and it would be unreasonable to expect critical edification from them; but even where it might seem likely to come in, it does not. The "Against Lucian" (Reiske, vol. iii.) is in the same case as the "For Aristophanes." The not uninteresting oration in defence of the system of his School (No. LXV., the last of Reiske's third volume) constantly refers to a matter which might be of great concern to us—the difficulty which schoolmasters or professors had at this time in keeping their pupils up to the mark in the *two* languages and literatures, Greek and Latin. But the discourse is not turned our way.

Nor do the *Letters*, our last resort, furnish us with much consolation. Their enormous number—there are over 1600 in Wolf's edition of the Greek originals, while the *editio princeps* of Zambicarius, in Latin only, adds problems of divagation and duplication to the heart's content of a certain order of scholar—is to some extent mitigated by their usual brevity. But this very brevity is often an aggravation not a mitigation of teen. Very many are mere "notes," as we should say, written, indeed, with the pomp and circumstance of the epistoler-rhetorician, but about nothing or next to nothing. Very often Libanius seems to be unconsciously anticipating the young person who said that he did not *read* books, he wrote them. Sometimes, at least, an apparently promising reference leads to a bitter disappointment, as in the case of that to Longinus. The reader—his appetite only whetted by the exertion of rectifying a miscitation in Wolf's *Preface* (it quotes the Letter as 990, while

it is really 998)—at last approaches his quest, and reads as follows *To Eusebius*, "The speech [or book] which I want is *Odenathus*, and it is by Longinus. You must give it me, and keep your promise." This is indeed precious, though a remembrance of the information, epistolary and other, vouchsafed in many modern biographies, may moderate sarcastic impulses No sarcasm, but profound sympathy, should be excited by the professor's constant complaints of headache, yet again they are unilluminative for our purpose In fact, such examination as I have been able to give to these Epistles shows that it is unreasonable to demand from them what they have no intention to supply. Very likely there are passages in this mass, as in that other of the Orations, which might be adduced but I am pretty sure that they would not invalidate the general proposition that, to Libanius also, those who want literary criticism proper need not go. Perhaps the nearest approaches to it are such things as the curious mention to Demetrius (128, Wolf, p 67) of parts of an artificial epistolary discourse of his friend s which he, Libanius, received when he had pupils with him, and, after being much bored by their recitations, read to them instead of lecturing himself.

Themistius

The titles at least of his correspondent Themistius[1] are sometimes a little more promising, and Themistius, a man of considerable and varied public employment, might seem less likely to indulge in the excesses of mere scholastic exercise which Libanius permitted himself But, on the whole, we shall have to acknowledge that this other famous rhetorician also is drawn practically blank for our purpose. "The Philosopher," "The Sophist," "How a man should ad-

[1] *Orationes*, ed Dindorf (Leipsic, 1832) Reiske, in a passage quoted at p xii of this, rates Themistius as, among other things, *vanus jactator philosophiæ suæ, specie magis quam re cultæ, ineptus et ridiculus vexator et applicator Homeri et veteris historiæ, tautologus et sophista*, &c. On the other hand, Sigismund Pandolf Malatesta, in 1464, carried off his bones from Sparta and buried them magnificently at Rimini as those *Philosophorum sua tempestate principis* But it was for the Aristotelian *Paraphrases*, apparently, that the lover of Isotta revered Themistius I have not neglected these (ed Spengel, 2 vols, Leipsic, 1866), but being exclusively on the logical, physical, and metaphysical works, they yield us little that I can discover I think Reiske is harsh, but not absolutely unjust.

dress the public"—these are subjects on which one might surely think that a little criticism would break in somehow and somewhere. But it never does To Themistius, as to so many others, the great writers of old are persons worthy of infinite respect, to be quoted freely, but to be quoted as a lawyer quotes this or that year-book, report, decision, for the substance only The general banality of his literary references may be tested by any body who chooses to refer to his citations and discussions of various authors in the *Basanistes* (Orat xxi, *ed cit* in note, p 296), or more succinctly still, to the reference to "golden Menander, and Euripides, and Sophocles, and fair Sappho, and noble Pindar' in the pleasant little piece, "To his Father," which comes before it

Julian

It is no doubt extremely unjust to argue from the performance of the pupil to the quality of the teacher, but we may at least say that, if there was any stronger critical tendency in Libanius or Themistius than appears in their own works, it is not reflected in one of their most diligent and distinguished pupils[1] The references to literature in the extant works[2] of Julian the Apostate are, in a certain sense and way, extremely numerous, in fact, it was almost vital to the odd mixture of dupery and quackery which had mastered him that he should be constantly quoting classical, if only because they were heathen, authors His *Orations*[3] are crammed with such quotations Moreover, we have from him a declaration in form of love for books "Some,' he says, at the beginning of his epistle (the ninth) to Ecdicius,[4] "love horses, some birds, some other beasts, in me from a child there has raged a dire longing for the possession of books" But in this, as in other cases, Desire seems rather to have excluded Criticism One is rather annoyed than edified by the banal reference, at the

[1] I do not know that Julian was in strictness a "pupil" of Themistius, but the tone of the long epistle to him, ed cit, *inf*, i 328, is at least half pupillary Himerius, another contemporary sophist to whom Photius (*v infra*, p 133) devotes some attention, was certainly Julian's tutor We have some of his work (ed Wernsdorf, Gottingen, 1790 and later), but I have found little to the present point in this, which is mostly pure epideictic, or didactic

[2] Ed Hertlein, 2 vols. or parts (Leipsic, 1875 76)

[3] Ed cit, i 1-327

[4] Ibid, ii 487 The numbers of the epistles will sufficiently indicate the whereabouts of the remaining citations from them

beginning of the *Misopogon*,[1] to his having seen "the barbarians beyond the Rhine singing wild songs composed in a speech resembling the croakings of rough-voiced fowls, and rejoicing in this music." If only the princely pedant would have copied a few of these croaks, and studied them, instead of trying to put back the clock of the world! His compliments and thanks to Libanius himself for the above-mentioned speech (Ep. 14) are of the most hackneyed character. He read it, he says, nearly all before breakfast, and finished it between breakfast and *siesta*.[2] "Thou art blessed to write thus, and still more to be able to think thus! O speech! O brains! O composition! O division! O epicheiremes! O *ordonnance!* O departures of style! O harmony! O symphony!" To which we may add "O *clichés!* O tickets! O [in Mr Burchell's rudeness] Fudge!"

In Ep. 24 there is a playful and pleasant discourse on the sense of the epithet γλυκὺς given by the poets and others to figs and honey, but it is only a trifle; and in 34, to Iamblichus, it is noteworthy how entirely the philosophic interest of literature overshadows, or rather how completely it blocks out, the literary whole. In 42, on education, and literature as its instrument, the old Plutarchian view[3] is refurbished, almost without alteration, and with only a fling or two at the Galilæans as an addition; while in 55 Eumenius and Pharianus are explicitly adjured "not to despise" logic, rhetoric, poetics, to study mathematics "more carefully," but to give their whole mind to the understanding of the dogmas of Aristotle and Plato. This is to be "the real business, the foundation and the structure and the roof," the rest are πάρεργα. The assertion is of course the reverse of original; but at this juncture it is all the more valuable to us, as a sort of summary and clincher at once of a large and important part of ancient opinion. In the borrower of it, as in those from whom it was borrowed, literary criticism, to full purpose and with full freedom, simply could not exist.

[1] Ibid., p. 434. [2] πρὶν ἀναλύσασθαι. [3] See next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, PLUTARCH, LUCIAN, LONGINUS.

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS—HIS WORKS—THE 'RHETORIC'—THE 'COMPOSITION'—CENSURES AND COMMENTARIES ON ORATORS, ETC.—THE MINOR WORKS—THE JUDGMENT OF THUCYDIDES—GENERAL CRITICAL VALUE—PLUTARCH—THE 'LIVES' QUITE BARREN FOR US—THE 'MORALIA' AT FIRST SIGHT PROMISING—EXAMINATION OF THIS PROMISE—THE "EDUCATION"—THE PAPERS ON "READING"—THE 'LIVES OF THE ORATORS'—THE 'MALIGNITY OF HERODOTUS'—THE "COMPARISON OF ARISTOPHANES AND MENANDER"—THE 'ROMAN QUESTIONS'—THE 'SYMPOSIACS'—LUCIAN—THE 'HOW TO WRITE HISTORY'—THE 'LEXIPHANES'—OTHER PIECES: THE 'PROMETHEUS ES'—WORKS TOUCHING RHETORIC—HIS CRITICAL LIMITATIONS—LONGINUS: THE DIFFICULTIES RAISED—"SUBLIMITY"—QUALITY AND CONTENTS OF THE TREATISE—PRELIMINARY RETROSPECT—DETAILED CRITICISM: THE OPENING—THE STRICTURE ON THE 'ORITHYIA'—"FRIGIDITY"—THE "MAIDENS IN THE EYES"—THE CANON "QUOD SEMPER"—THE SOURCES OF SUBLIMITY—LONGINUS ON HOMER—ON SAPPHO—"AMPLIFICATION"—"IMAGES"—THE FIGURES—"FAULTLESSNESS"—HYPERBOLES—"HARMONY"—THE CONCLUSION—MODERNITY OF THE TREATISE, OR RATHER SEMPITERNITY.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

FROM a certain point of view, no critical writer of antiquity has a greater interest than the rhetorician Dionysius of Halicarnassus. It is true, of course, that this view is at once strictly limited and decidedly complex. As Dionysius is not even to be mentioned with Longinus for what may be called critical inspiration, so he falls simply out of sight when he is compared with Aristotle in point of authority, of method, and, above all, of that somewhat indirect and illegitimate, but real, importance which is derived

from a long tradition So, too, there is nothing in him of that "flash," that illumination, which we still receive from the turning-on of the lamp of satiric genius to the critical field by Lucian, as long before by Aristophanes But the treatise *On the Sublime* is, after all, but an inestimable fragment the loss to criticism, had the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* shared the fate of some others of their author's works, would consist partly in the loss of what has been written about them and in following of them, while Aristophanes and Lucian are only critics at intervals and by accident In Dionysius we have a critic by profession, and not merely a rhetorician, of whose critical work an assortment, varied in matter and considerable in bulk, survives, who had an evident love for his business, and whose talents for it were very much greater than some authorities seem willing to allow

His works

It would be unnecessary to observe (if there were not a sort of persons who, in such cases, take the absence of mention for the presence of ignorance) that the work attributed to Dionysius, and his identity and unity as an author, have been subjected to the common processes of attempted disintegration. We are told, as usual, that the works are to be credited or debited not to one Dionysius, but to two or even three Dionysii or others, and that individual pieces must or may be split up into genuine and spurious parts But this, besides that it is usual and inevitable, concerns us here little or not at all. Hardly anything that is about to be said would have to be altered, if it were quite certain that the critical works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus were the production of a whole club of contributors, or had accumulated as the successive productions of a family of rhetoricians, as long-lived and pertinacious in Rhetoric as the Monros of Edinburgh in another art or science. They consist, taking the order of the edition of Reiske,[1] of a treatise of some length on Composition

[1] 6 vols, Leipsic, 1775 77 The first four contain the historical, the two last the rhetorical work A pamphlet edition of rhetorical fragments, by C T Rossler (Leipsic, 1873), may be usefully bound in with this. But Usener's still more recent edition of the so called περὶ μιμήσεως and the Epistles to Ammæus and Pompey (Bonn, 1889) is of great importance for its remarks on Dionysius and Quintilian, and for other animadversions.

in the literal sense of the putting together of words; of a set treatise on Rhetoric; of a collection of brief judgments on the principal authors, in Greek, and another of much longer ones, which is unfortunately not complete, but which contains elaborate handlings of Lysias, Isocrates, Isæus, and Deinarchus, of a letter to a certain Ammæus, arguing that Demosthenes was not indebted to the rhetorical precepts of Aristotle; of another to Cnæus Pompey on Plato and the Historians; of a second to Ammæus on the idioms of Thucydides; of a celebrated and interesting examination, at great length, of the chief historians of Greece; and of another, also well known, which is usually quoted by its Latin title, *De Admiranda Vi dicendi Demosthenis*, where δεινότης, perhaps, might be more properly translated "Of Demosthenes' oratorical resourcefulness."

Of these the least interesting by far is the professed *Rhetoric:* and it is with the less reluctance that we may resign it to those who pronounce it, in whole or in part, spurious. It opens, in the very worst and most sterile form of the ancient Rhetoric, by a series of chapters on the different commonplaces available for orations on different stock subjects and occasions,—a panegyric, a marriage, a birthday, a funeral, an exhortation to athletes—things trite and obvious to desperation, the very cabbage of the schools, the opprobrium of all ancient literature, though perhaps not worse than our own frantic efforts to avoid the obvious. It passes to the favourite sub-subject of the Figures, but does not treat these in the worst way, gives the usual, chiefly poetical, illustrations, and concludes with observations on the (again usual) subdivisions of the matter. There is nothing in it that is original and nothing that is characteristic, and the most Dionysian traits, such as the curious stress laid upon the Herodotean episode of Gyges, might as well have been copied by an imitator as duplicated by the author himself.

The Rhetoric.

The remaining works are much better and much more important. It is true that the *De Compositione* (as its title honestly holds forth) belongs to the lower, not the higher, division of the school-grouping of the subject —to Composition, not to Rhetoric. But proper Composition,

The Composition.

even in the school sense, is the necessary vestibule of style; and, until attention has been paid to it, there is no hope of anything further that shall be of real use in literary criticism. And it is also not only something, but a great thing, to make an advance upon that (one had but for a sacred shame, almost said) ignorant and unintelligent contempt of words as words which we find in Aristotle himself. Dionysius indeed, as in duty bound, glances at the contempt of *lexis* which the great Master of the Walk had made fashionable. It is true, he says, that boys are caught by the bloom of style, but it takes the experience of years to judge it rightly. And he promises a supplementary treatise *On the Choice of Words*, which we should be very glad to possess. But for the present he is busied, not with their choice, but with their arrangement after they are chosen; and he deals with this partly by positive precept, but chiefly by the use of examples, from Homer in poetry and Herodotus in prose. Dionysius was a fervent devotee of his admirable countryman, allowing his devotion, indeed, to carry him to the length of distinct injustice to that countryman's great rival Thucydides; but it has here inspired him well enough. And Homer could not lead him wrong; though perhaps we may note here, as elsewhere with the ancients, a distinctly insufficient appreciation of the differences between poetry and prose. He begins quite at the beginning with the letters, touches on onomatopœia—that process which the great poetic languages like Greek and English admit so readily, and of which the less poetic like Latin and French are so afraid—and on the practice (of which, like a true critic, he has no fear) of reviving archaisms when desirable. Then he attacks the question how beautiful diction and composition are to be attained. Here again, and necessarily, he proceeds more by example than by precept, for indeed precept, of the *a priori* kind, is in these matters mostly valueless. But one sentence (p. 96, Reiske) is worth quoting at length, because it puts boldly the truth which Aristotle had evaded or pooh-poohed in his excessive devotion to the philosophy of literature rather than to literature itself: "So that it is necessary that that diction should be beautiful in which there are beautiful words, and

that of beautiful words beautiful syllables and letters are the cause." Dionysius knew this, as Longinus knew it three hundred, as Dante knew it thirteen hundred, years after him: but, six hundred years after Dante, there are still persons who seem to regard the fact as somehow or other degrading.

Then he goes to what even Aristotle had not disdained, —though, in common with Dionysius himself, Quintilian, and others, he speaks on the subject in terms not easy for modern comprehension,—the rhythmical adjustment of prose as well as of verse, admitting even in Thucydides, to whom he is as a rule not too just, an abundant possession of this gift of rhythm.

A very striking passage, and the oldest of its kind, occurs at p. 133, R, in which Dionysius declares his own conviction that the style is noblest of all which has greatest variety, most frequent changes of harmony, most transitions from periodic to extra-periodic arrangement, most alternations of short and long clauses, rapid and slow movements, and greatest shift of rhythmical valuation For we must remember that, even after the advances which the study of seventeenth- and the practice of nineteenth-century writers have made in English prose rhythm, it can probably never attain to the formal particularity —I do not say perfection—of Greek. We cannot—at least the present writer, who has been told that he has no ill ear, cannot —appreciate the effect of a dochmiac as a single foot; it is hard to do more than guess at the effect on a Greek of the use of the different pæons; and in at least one famous passage of Quintilian all candid moderns have confessed themselves baffled.[1]

His Pindaric example is interesting because it is about the only considerable fragment which we have of the master's Dithyrambic writing.[2] His Thucydidean specimen is the well-known proem to the History. The criticism of the Pindaric extract may seem to modern readers a rather odd *pot-pourri* of merely grammatical or linguistic, and of strictly critical, observations. Thus Dionysius observes that the first

[1] See *infra*, bk. ii. p. 304 *sq.*

[2] See also the amended text in Bergk's *Lyrici Græci*, i. 392-395.

member[1] consists of four parts of speech: a verb, two nouns, and a "conjunction" (he expressly, in another passage, intimates doubts whether this or "preposition" is the proper word to use), and then, after this mere "parsing," handles the construction of the phrase and the juxtaposition of it, attributing a certain designed discord or clash as the general motive of the piece. And he recognises the same clash in the Thucydidean passage, in which, while (like a rhetorician as he is) half regretting the absence of panegyric and theatrical grace, he admits "an archaic and headstrong beauty,"[2] supporting this general verdict with the same minute examination as before. Next he quotes Sappho's great hymn to Aphrodite, as Longinus was afterwards to quote its greater companion, allowing (and no wonder!) felicity of diction and grace to this in the fullest degree. And later he occupies a good deal of space with those approximations between oratory and poetry, which may seem to us otiose, but which have more than one good side, the best of all perhaps being the fact that they induced critics, as in the instances referred to, to quote, and so preserve, precious fragments which we should otherwise have lost.

On the whole, this treatise, if studied carefully, must raise some astonishment that Dionysius should have been spoken of disrespectfully by any one who himself possesses competence in criticism. A good deal of the work is, no doubt, for us, a little out of fashion; the traditional technicalities seem jejune; the processes are out of date. Yet, from more points of view than one, the piece gives Dionysius no mean rank as a critic. To those who want characteristic aspects, aspects put in striking phrase, that attribution of "headstrong beauty" to Thucydides should excuse a good deal: that is no mere dead ticket of the schools. To the more methodical critic of criticism the minute processes of investigation, the careful estimate of the incidence of such a sound in such and such a position, even the mere parsing view of clauses and sentences, are things themselves worthy of minute study. And it is not only fair

[1] ἴδετ' ἐν χαρὸν Ὀλόμπιοι. Some MSS. read δεῦτ', which appears in Reiske. The comment requires a verb: but perhaps Dionysius might have regarded δεῦτε as such.

[2] ἀρχαικὸν δέ τι καὶ αὐθαδες κἀλλος.

but no more than necessary, to remember that this, after all, is only a treatise on a certain aspect or department of criticism, and that we have no right to demand from it more than satisfactory treatment of its special subject—the "composition," the symphonic arrangement of words and the elements of words To some moderns Dionysius may seem too attentive to mint and anise and cumin, but he would have no great difficulty in retorting equally contemptuous comparisons for the windy generalisations on one hand, and the sheer neglect of all minutiæ of form on the other, which characterise too much modern critical work

Censures and Commentaries on Orators, &c

The short "censures" of ancient writers have, perhaps, an interest of curiosity greater than their interest of value It is not improbable that they served as a pattern to Quintilian, who often suggests a knowledge of Dionysius.[1] But though they are ushered in with some quite irreproachable commonplaces as to the excellence of contemplating excellent models, they are themselves, at least sometimes, too brief, and too specifically sententious, to have much intrinsic interest or much teaching power We are not greatly advanced in the understanding of Hesiod whether we have read him or not, by being told that he paid attention to pleasure, and the smoothness of words, and harmonious composition Nor can any of the poetical labels of our Halicarnassian be said to be very much more informing, while in dramatic writers he does not go beyond "The Three," and has little to tell us that is newer than the tolerably obvious things that Æschylus is magnificent in his language, Sophocles noble in his characterisation, Euripides questionable in both The historians he treats at first in contrasted pairs—Herodotus and Thucydides, of course, Philistus and Xenophon,—then

[1] See on this point Usener (*op cit*), who would rather suppose a common indebtedness The "censures" form the bulk of the fragments which he has published as περὶ μιμήσεως Perhaps the best examples of really illuminative critical phrase in them are the "pugnacious roughness," ἀγωνιστικὴ τραχυτης, ascribed to Antimachus, and the "combination of magnificence and terseness, μεγαλοφυες καὶ βραχυ, to Alcæus Of the shorter fragments the summary of the requirements of art as "a happy nature, exact study, and laborious practice" is good if not astonishing.

Theopompus alone. The philosophers he polishes off in a combined paragraph of a dozen lines, which hardly attempts to be characteristic save in the case of Aristotle. And then, with a half apology for so summarily despatching these, he turns, as to his proper business, to the orators. But even here we have mere summary, and must turn to the far fuller, but, unluckily, not quite complete, *Commentaries* on the same subject.

These, addressed to his favourite correspondent Ammæus, begin with the familiar complaint (which no critical experience of the past ever drives from a critic's mouth) about the badness of the literary times. The good old Attic Muse herself, like a neglected wife, is insulted, deprived of her rights, and even menaced in her existence, by impudent foreign baggages, Phrygian, or Carian, or Barbarian out and out. But we are rather surprised (till we remember that Dionysius was a settler at Rome, and that it was his interest, if not to do as the Romans did, at any rate to please them) to hear that things are improving, owing to the good sense of the governors of the Roman state, itself the governess of the world. There is some hope that this "senseless eloquence will not last for another generation."[1] And Dionysius will do what he can to help the good work by a study of the six greatest of the old Attic orators, Lysias, Isocrates, Isæus, Demosthenes, Hyperides, Æschines. Unluckily we only have the first three of these, though a judgment of Deinarchus, not promised, exists, and the *De Admiranda Vi* supplies the gap, as far as Demosthenes goes, in even fuller measure than in proportion to the others. We may as well take these and other things together, in order to have something like a conspectus of the case before summing up the critical characteristics of this most interesting critic.

If they are somewhat disappointing, this (to borrow the convenient bull) is not much more than we might have expected.

The minor works.

The *De Admiranda Vi* is by far the best of them, and contains a great deal of excellent criticism, both particular and general. But the orators had already for centuries been the very parade-ground of Rhetoric; and as paradoxical excursions from orthodox limits were, though by

[1] Petronius found that it did!

no means unknown to the ancients, not in great favour with them, everything that was likely to be said of the Ten was trite and hackneyed. The smaller epistles and the judgment of Thucydides (perverse as this last exploit is) are, on the whole, more interesting. The little paper on the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle and the Speeches of Demosthenes, arguing that the latter are anterior to the former, is of a kind with which modern times are only too familiar, but displays none of the puerility and false logic which, in our modern instances, that familiarity has taught us to associate with the kind. The contention is undoubtedly sound: the handling is reasonable, and the whole makes us distinctly sorry that Dionysius, who had access to so much that we have lost, did not write a complete *History of Greek Literature*, which would have been invaluable, instead of his *History of Rome*, which we could have done without, though it is far from valueless. As it is, this is one of the few important contributions to such a history that we possess, of really ancient date. If he is less happy in the judgment of Plato, inserted (with some on the historians) in the letter to Cnæus Pompey, this is principally due to that horror of poetic prose, of dithyrambic expression, which (perhaps for better reasons than we know) was then creeping over criticism, and which we shall find dominant in critical, though not in popular, estimate during the earlier centuries of the Roman Empire.

The second epistle to Ammæus seems to be one of the latest of the numerous utterances of Dionysius on the great Athenian historian. It is somewhat meticulous and verbal; but it is curious that the just-mentioned horror of gorgeousness reappears in it.

The judgment of Thucydides.

And so we come to the famous onslaught in form against the son of Olorus. It is introduced by a somewhat elaborate apology—the critic going so far as to shelter himself under the leading case of Aristotle *v.* Plato. Thence he passes to a short sketch of the predecessors of Thucydides in history, commends him for dropping their fables, &c., but soon settles down to a regular *éreintement*—a "slating" criticism of the familiar type, wherein the desire to "dust the varlet's jacket" is evidently not merely superior but

anterior to any desire whatsoever to criticise varlet or jacket on the merits of either. The division into winters and summers, the setting forth of the causes of the war, the conduct and details of the story, the speeches—all come in for reprehension. But Dionysius is, as we should expect from his other handlings, much kinder to the style, though he objects to its occasional obscurity, urges difficulties on the score of the Figures, criticises some passages at great length, and ends by noticing the chief of the historian's imitators, among whom he includes Demosthenes. On the whole, the article (as we may call it), though one-sided, is less so than some current descriptions of it may have conveyed to those who have not read it. But still it belongs to the class of critiques indicated above, a class in which few of the best examples of criticism are to be found, except from the point of view of those who hold the true business of that art to be, like the "backward voice" of Trinculo-Caliban, "to utter foul speeches and to detract."

General critical value.

Yet, on the whole, it need not interfere with the emphatic repetition of the opinion, with the expression of which this notice of the Halicarnassian began, that he is a very considerable critic, and one to whom justice has not usually, if at all, yet been done. Great as is the place which he gives to oratory, there is no ancient writer (except Longinus) who seems so free from the intention to allow it any really mischievous primacy. If he is, as might be expected from a teacher, sometimes a little meticulous in his philology and lower Rhetoric, yet this very attention to detail saves him from the distinctly unfortunate and rather unphilosophical superciliousness of Aristotle towards style, and from the equally unfortunate divagation, both of that great man and of all his followers, into questions vaguely æsthetic instead of questions definitely literary. The error which, at the new birth of criticism in Europe, was so lucklessly reintroduced and exaggerated by the Italian critics of the sixteenth century—the error of wool-gathering after abstract questions of the nature and justification of poetry, of the *a priori* rules suitable for poetic forms, of Unities, and so forth—meets very little encouragement from Dionysius, and it is perhaps for this very

reason that he has been slighted by high-flying æstheticians. Not thus will the wiser mind judge him, but as a critic who saw far, and for the most part truly, into the proper province of literary criticism—that is to say, the reasonable enjoyment of literary work and the reasonable distribution of that work into good, not so good, and bad. Here, and not in the Laputan *meteorosophia* of theories of poetry, is criticism's main work; not that she may not justly imp her wings for a higher flight now and then, but that she must beware of flapping them in the inane.

Plutarch.

If the opinions of the criticism of the critical power and position of Dionysius of Halicarnassus have varied rather strangely, those uttered concerning Plutarch as a critic are still more irreconcilable. For he has not only been casually suggested but elaborately championed[1] as a candidate for the signal honour of the authorship of the Περὶ Ὕψους—that is to say, as one capable of producing what is perhaps the critical masterpiece of antiquity, and certainly one of the few critical masterpieces of the world. From this one would be prepared to expect at least very strong evidences of critical faculty, and some noteworthy pieces of critical accomplishment, in his extant works, which, it must be remembered, are extremely voluminous, and of a character remarkably well suited for the exercise of literary criticism. The *Vitæ Parallelæ* at least *might* have been frequently directed in this way; while the enormous miscellany of the *Moralia* corresponds more closely to the "Essays" of modern writers than any collection of the kind that we have from ancient times. Now, it is hardly necessary to say that the modern Essay has from the very first set strongly in the literary direction, and that up to the present time the amount of literary criticism, in essay form, is probably not less, while the value of it is infinitely greater, than that of all the formal treatises and non-essay-fashioned handlings of the subject.

On turning to the *Lives* we meet with an almost complete disappointment. If it be said that Plutarch's object was to give us contrasts of practical men—soldiers and statesmen, not

[1] By Vaucher and some others.

philosophers or men of letters — that is, no doubt, a valid answer as far as it goes, though it would scarcely be unfair to argue from the fact that, at any rate, matters literary were not of the first importance to him. But in one famous instance, the parallel of Demosthenes and Cicero, he not only had a most proper opportunity for dealing with the subject, but was almost obliged to deal with it. It must therefore be worth while to look at his dealing.

The Lives quite barren for us.

He begins the "Demosthenes" with an excuse for his small knowledge of Latin, and makes this a pretext for deliberately excluding all literary and even all oratorical comparison of the two. Nay, he goes further, and actually upbraids Cæcilius (apparently the same person whose treatment of the Sublime Longinus did not like) with having made this. After such a refusal it is surely idle to contend for any real or strong literary and critical *nisus* in the agreeable moralist and biographer of Chæronea. Had there been any such tendency in him, he simply could not have avoided such a palmary occasion of giving it course. Even if he really considered himself incompetent to deliver an opinion of Cicero, he would have had something to say about Demosthenes; even if this declared incompetence was only a disguise for the reluctance to treat Latin literature seriously, which is so noticeable in Greeks, this would not invalidate the reasoning.

The Moralia at first sight promising.

Let us, however, for the sake of the argument, and out of pure generosity, accept his excuse, put the *Lives* out of the question, and turn to the *Moralia*.[1] As has been said above, if we do not find literary criticism, and good literary criticism, in such a collection of a man's work, it must be either because he has no taste for it, or because he has the taste without the faculty. For the collection is very large, and it is almost absolutely miscellaneous: the mere title *Moralia* is nothing more than an unauthorised ticket, and has really nothing to do with the contents. Neither Montaigne nor De Quincey takes a more absolute liberty of speaking on any subject that happens to

[1] I use the Teubner edition by Hercher and Bernardakis, 5 vols., Leipsic (1872-1893).

strike his fancy than Plutarch. And it cannot be said that at least some of his subjects are without direct connection with criticism. The two opening papers, "On the Education of Children" and "How a young man should read ["listen to," literally, but this means what we mean by "read"] the Poets," would seem, the one almost necessarily (considering the humanism of ancient education), and the other inevitably, to lead to the subject. The next on "Hearing" (*i.e.*, "Reading") generally, might even seem to strengthen the necessity. Many of the other titles are promising, and, both in the nature of the case and from what we know of the general course of ancient table-talk, the bulky volume of *Symposiac Questions* might seem likely to be most prolific, while it is actually not infertile in matter of our kind. Let us examine what is the performance of these promises.

Examination of this promise.

Englishmen, and especially students of English literature, ought to take no mean interest in the tractate on Education, if only for the reason that it had a most powerful influence on the great Elizabethan age, both directly and through the medium of Lyly's *Euphues*, which is in part[1] almost a translation of it. But though, not merely for this but other more intrinsic reasons, the treatise *is* interesting, it is not of much good to us. In fact, it is scarcely a paradox to say that it is one of its merits not to be of much good to us. It is a truism that the very noblest characteristic of Greek education, a characteristic never fully recovered since, was its combination of high literary ideas with the most perfect and practical recognition of the fact that book-education by itself is education of the most wretchedly inadequate character. Plutarch (and again it is much to his credit) thoroughly shared this view—so thoroughly that he begins his treatise a little before the birth of the children to be educated, and continues it (quite in the Rousseau style) by insisting that mothers shall suckle their own offspring. From the first the importance of inculcating good habits, of not telling children immoral or silly stories, of

The "Education."

[1] The section "Euphues and his Ephœbus." The three tractates commented on in this and the next paragraph will be found in vol. i. pp. 1-111 of the edition cited.

being careful in the selection of nurses and tutors,—this is the thing that Plutarch busies himself about. He will have them learn all the usual arts and sciences, but he dwells on these very little. How to give them good morals and healthy bodies; how to keep them or wean them from bad company and foul language; how to practise them in manly sports and exercises—these are Plutarch's cares. Excellent, nay! thrice excellent preoccupation! but it necessarily makes the treatise of no use to *us*.

The Papers on "Reading."

No one can reasonably blame its author for this, especially as he seems likely to fill up the gap in the two following Essays. "How a young man should read Poetry" is a title which would serve well for the very best and most stimulating critical observations of a Coleridge or an Arnold; or to go nearer to its own times, it might really do for an alternative heading to the Περὶ Τ῎ψους itself. Yet we very soon see—and we must know our Plutarch very little if we do not *fore*see it—that the ethical preoccupation is just as supreme and exclusive here. The piece is in itself an interesting one, and preserves for us a large number of quotations, some of which are unique. But Plutarch's handling of them is as little literary as he can make it. You cannot (he tells his friend Marcus Sedatus with a kind of gloomy resignation) prevent clever boys from reading poetry, so you must make the best of it. It is like the head of an octopus, very nice to eat, nourishing enough, but apt to give restless and fantastic dreams. So you must be careful to administer pædagogic correctives, and to put the right meaning on dangerous things, like the account of Helen's complaisance to Paris after his disgraceful flight from battle, and of Hera's bewitching Zeus with the aid of the Cestus. This kind of thing runs throughout the piece—the most famous certainly, and perhaps the most diverting instance of Plutarch's mania for moralising, being his dealing with the delightful passage of the meeting of Nausicaa and Odysseus. He does not indeed go the entire length of the neoclassical critics of the French school as to this gem. He only says that *if* the Princess fell in love with Odysseus at first sight, her boldness and impudence are very shocking. But if

she perceived what a sensible man he was, and preferred him to some rich dandy of her fellow-citizens, it was most creditable. It is not of course worth while to waste any good indignation, or any otherwise utilisable scorn, upon this priggish silliness, the dregs of older Platonism-and-water, the caricature and reduction-to-the-absurd of a confusion only too common among ancient critics, and not quite unknown among modern. It is only necessary to point out that, from a man capable of it, good literary criticism would be surprising, and that as a matter of fact there is here no strictly literary criticism at all. The paper ends as it began, with the general doctrine that the young must be well steered in their reading, so that they may be kindly handed on by Poetry to Philosophy.

The more general tract, "How one should [hear or] read," is shorter, has few quotations or none, and is less obtrusively moral in tone. But it still regards hearing, or reading, not in any way as the means of enjoying an artistic pleasure, but as the means of acquiring or failing to acquire information or edification. You must listen (or read) attentively: not take unreasonable likes and dislikes, excessive admirations and contempts. You must more particularly *not* take special pleasure in style and phrase. (Here we come not so much to neglect of literary criticism as to positive blasphemy against it.) A man who will not attend to a useful statement, because its style is not Attic, is like a man who refuses a wholesome drug because it is not offered him in Attic pottery. Later, there are some remarks on actual tricks of style. But, on the whole, it would be possible for a man to be educated, to live his life, carefully observing the precepts of this little batch of tracts, and to die a most respectable person, after perhaps having lived a happy and useful life, yet never to know or to care whether or why Plato was a better prose-writer than any tenth-rate sophist, Tennyson a better poet than Tom Sternhold or Tom Shadwell.

Turn to the *Lives of the Orators*.[1] There is no question here, under the head of Demosthenes, of any inability to understand Latin; and the various styles of the famous Ten might have tempted most, and did tempt many, Greeks to indulge in

[1] V. 146-202.

literary analysis and literary comparison. In the tractate before us, be it Plutarch's or be it somebody else's, the author avoids touching upon even the fringe of the literary part of his subject with an ingenuity that is quite marvellous, or a stolidity that is more marvellous still. All these great masters of Greek might be generals or mere jurists, sculptors or fishmongers, for any allusion that he makes to the means by which they won their fame.

The Lives of the Orators.

Everybody hopes that Plutarch did not write the *Malignity of Herodotus.*[1] But somebody wrote it: and while the general handling is by no means alien from Plutarch's the tractate, even if apocryphal, very adequately represents the attitude of no inconsiderable section of Greek men of letters to literature. Silly as it is, it illustrates rather usefully the curious *parochiality* of the Greeks, to some extent visible even at their best time, but naturally far more noticeable when that best time was over. Herodotus spoke disrespectfully of Bœotians: Plutarch was a Bœotian; woe to Herodotus. This kind of attitude is strange to Englishmen, who generally think far too well of themselves and their country to care what any poor outside creature says of it or them. But it is not unknown in some of the less predominant partners of the associated British Empire; it is notoriously very strong in America; and it is the rule, rather than the exception, on the Continent of Europe. It is, however, perhaps the worst mood in the world for literary criticism; and Plutarch, never strong there, is never weaker than here. He lets slip indeed, at the beginning, an interesting admission that Herodotus was generally thought to combine, with other good qualities, a peculiar facility in the reading of men, and a fluent pen. This is a literary criticism, and we may expect it to be met with retort in kind. But it is the nasty underhand temper that he wishes to exhibit. Herodotus, it seems, always uses the most damaging expressions; he drags in people's misdeeds when they have nothing to do with the story, he omits their merits, he takes the worst views when more charitable ones were possible, and

The Malignity of Herodotus.

[1] V. 208-263. "Bad-bloodedness" is perhaps more equal than "malignity" to κακοήθεια.

so forth. Which general charges are supported by an ostensibly careful examination of particular passages throughout the history. Comparisons complimentary to Thucydides are often made, but of the literary differences of the two great historians there is scarcely a word. Only at the end, as at the beginning, there is a curious kind of extorted confession. The pen is graphic and the style is sweet, and there is grace and freshness and cleverness in the narrative. But you must take heed of his κακοήθεια as of a Spanish fly among roses. *Habemus confitentem, O Plutarche!*

The "Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander."

The *Placita Philosophorum* are as barren as the *Oratorum Vitæ*, but the "Comparison between Aristophanes and Menander,"[1] though only an extract or abstract, may seem as if it could not deceive us. That the result is the depreciation of the greater writer and the exaltation of the smaller one does not matter much: we must not judge a critic by our agreement with the *sense* of his criticism. And it may be admitted that the technicalities of the art, which in other places are always incomprehensibly absent, do put in some appearance here. But though there is even some critical jargon,[2] there is no critical grasp. We are told with a shower of additional epithets that Aristophanes is φορτικὸς καὶ θυμελικὸς καὶ βάναυσος, the first and last of these words corresponding to different sides of our "vulgar," while the second means "smacking of the *thymele*," "theatrical," "stagey"; that Menander's style is "one, despite its variety," free from puns and other naughty things. But here also the ethical side is what really engages the critic. Aristophanes is harsh, he is shocking, he degrades his subjects; Menander is graceful, full of instructive sentiment and common-sense. And the genius? Plutarch is quite frank on that point. He says, καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' ἐν οἷς ἔστιν ἡ θρυλουμένη δεξιότης—"I really don't know where the much-talked-of cleverness comes in." Alas! that "speaks" him.

No different conclusion will be reached wherever we look in

[1] V. 203-207.

[2] The late Professor Nettleship, as noted already, was the first, I think, to put together a list of these stock terms, which is not uninteresting. It will be further referred to in the next Book.

the great collection of the *Moralia* Take, for instance, the *Roman Questions*[1] It may be said that these are confessedly *in alia materia*, but the objection is hasty. We have seen that Plutarch, in the preface to his *Lives* of Demosthenes and Cicero, pleads his scanty acquaintance with Latin as an excuse for not attempting one of the most obvious and interesting of things, one, moreover, almost peremptorily demanded of him—that is to say, the literary comparison of the two greatest orators, of two of the greatest prose writers, of Greece and Rome respectively Yet we see from these *Roman Questions* that, when the subject really interested him, he could pry into Latin matters, of the obscurest and most out of-the way kind, with unwearied labour and curiosity, and with a great deal of acuteness to boot. Not an eccentric rite of Latin religion, not a quaint bit of Latin folk-lore, not a puzzling social custom at Rome, can he meet with and hear of, but he hunts up the history and literature of it, turns it over and over in his mind, has traditional or conjectural explanations of it, treats it with all the affectionate diligence of the critical commentator And yet he is afraid or indisposed to attempt a literary estimate of the authors of the two *Philippics*

The Roman Questions.

The much larger *Symposiacs*[2] tell the same story, no longer indirectly, but, as it were, aloud and open-mouthed There are nine books of them, ten or a dozen questions, sometimes more, are discussed in each book, often at considerable length Table-talk among the Greeks and Romans was notoriously inclined in a literary direction[3] But Plu-

The Symposiacs.

[1] II 250 320 The Greek title αἴτια is rather "cause" than "question" But Philemon Holland's translation of 1603 (recently reprinted, with an admirable introduction by Mr F B Jevons, London, 1892) has naturalised this latter version in English.

[2] IV. 1-395

[3] We are, however, by no means so fortunate (from the point of view of this book) in our remains of Greek Symposiacs as we are in those of Latin The famous *Deipnosophists* of Athenæus, in which, about 230 A.D., its invaluable author accumulated (under the guise of a conversation in which persons of the importance of Ulpian and Galen took part) the most enormous miscellany of quotation, anecdote, and *quodlibeta* in ancient if not in all literature, is, of course, for all its want of literary form, a priceless book As a storehouse of quotation it has no rival but the *Anatomy of Melancholy* and though it is, in spirit, unity, literary gifts, and almost everything else, as far below the *Anatomy* as one book can be below another, it is from this

tarch's table-talk is nothing so little as it is literary. The customs and etiquette of conviviality; the proceedings, proper or not proper, at and after a good dinner; the physical qualities of foods and wines, receive natural, full, and curious treatment. Sometimes the writer allows his fancy the remotest excursions, as in the famous debate whether the bird comes before the egg or the egg before the bird. He discusses philosophy, physics, physic; he inquires whether sea-water will or (like a more sophisticated product) will not wash clothes; appraises the quality of jests; considers whether meat gets high sooner in moonlight or sunlight; and whether there is more echo by day or by night. But amid all this expatiation he seems to avoid literature as if it were Scylla and Charybdis in one. If he draws anywhere near the subject, it is to treat it in the least literary way possible. We see the name of Homer in the title of a chapter, and begin to hope for something to our point. But Plutarch is only anxious to know why, when Homer mentions games, he puts boxing first, then wrestling, and running last. We find in one of the prefaces (that to Book V.) a scornful glance at φορτικοὶ καὶ ἀφιλόλογοι, who tell riddles and so forth after dinner. But, alas! the book itself practises "Philology" in a way that is of very little good to us. It does indeed open with the old and still unsettled question why the dramatic and literary treatment of painful things is pleasant; but this is a question rather of philosophy than of literature.

special point of view to be preferred to it, because the vast majority of its sources of quotation are lost. For the history of literature as for that of manners, it is a mine of wealth, for the history of literary criticism almost barren. For expression Athenæus seems to have had no care at all, though his curiosity as to matter was insatiable, and as nearly as possible indiscriminate. His spirit is exactly that of the scholiasts referred to in a former page; and whether he is discussing the varieties of vegetables and wines and oysters, or the highly spiced and salted witticisms of Athenian ladies of pleasure, or any other subject, he hardly becomes a critic for one moment, though no critic can neglect him. Perhaps the nearest approach to sustained critical remark is the captious attack on Plato at the end of the 11th book, which is as feeble as it is captious (The standard edition of Athenæus is still that of Schweighauser (14 vols., Argentorati, 1801-7); but those who suffer from inadequate shelf-room may have (as the present writer long ago had regretfully) to expel this in favour of the far less handsome and useful, but compacter, one of Dindorf (3 vols. Leipsic, 1827).)

It starts the inquiry whether prizes for poetry at festivals are of great antiquity; but this is mere antiquarianism. When it is for a moment actually "philological," inquiring into epithets like *ζωρότερον* and *ἀγλαόκαρπον* and *ὑπέρφλοια*, it is always the bare meaning, the application, and so forth, that is attended to. When, for instance, Plutarch discusses the second word, he does not so much as touch that general question of Greek compound epithets which Mr Matthew Arnold touches (and begs) in a well-known passage.[1] He does not even glance at the grace, the beauty, the harmony of the word itself. He only wants to know why the poet specially applies this term to apple-trees, and why Empedocles selects apples themselves for the other epithet, *ὑπέρφλοια*. Nay, in discussing this last he gives a kind of indirect slap at the notion of an epithet being selected for the sake of "pretty writing and blooming colour."[2] And so everywhere. It is not too much to say that Plutarch *invariably* avoids when he can, and when he accidentally approaches it, despatches in as unliterary a manner as possible, the business of the literary critic. If he does not (as there is some warrant for thinking he did) positively undervalue and almost despise this, he clearly regards it as something for which he himself has no vocation and in which he feels no interest. And then they make him the author of the Περὶ Ὕψους!

Lucian.

To say that Lucian[3] is the Aristophanes of post-Christian Greek may seem a feeble and obvious attempt at epigram. But, so far as criticism is concerned, it has a propriety which takes it out of the category of the forcible-feeble. Not only are the two writers alike (giving weight for age) in the purity of their respective styles; not only are they alike in the all-dissolving irony and the staunch Toryism of their satire on innovations; but their critical attitudes are (when once more due allowance has been made for circumstances and seasons) curiously similar. Neither is a literary critic first of all or by profession,—though Lucian's date, the state of literature in his time, and his being in the

[1] *On Translating Homer*, §§ 1, 2 *passim*.

[2] καλλιγραφίας ἕνεκα—ὥσπερ ἀνθηροῖς χρώμασι.

[3] I use the Tauchnitz edition, by Dindorf, 3 vols., Leipsic, 1858.

main a prose writer, give him a sort of "false air" of being this. Both dislike innovations of phrase, at least as much because they are innovations as because they are actually in bad taste Both hate "conceit," and neologism, at least as vehemently because such things happen to be associated with opinions obnoxious to them as because they dislike the things themselves. And consequently (though again, for reasons easily given, less apparently in Lucian's case than in Aristophanes), the critical work of both, though displaying astonishing acuteness, is rather a special phase, a particular function of a general attitude of satiric contemplation of life, than criticism pure and simple. In both, yet again, the combination of critical temperament and literary power makes what they have to say on the subject of extraordinary interest. Yet once more, in this case as in the former, the interest lies a little outside the path of strict criticism. What Lucian has to tell us is perhaps best, as it is certainly most memorably, summed up in the epigram attributed to him (and I am sure not unworthily) in the *Anthology*—

> "Lucian wrote this, knowing old things and vain—
> For vain is also that which men think wise:
> No human thought is wholly clear and plain;
> What thou ador'st is scorn in others' eyes."[1]

We do not get much beyond this cheerful doctrine in his more directly critical utterances. Much acuteness has been ascribed to the πῶς δεῖ ἱστορίαν συγγράφειν.[2] But one had hardly need be a Lucian to see that the historian (or anybody else) must understand his subject, and know how to set it forth: though it may be very freely granted that a strict application of the doctrine would make considerable gaps on the shelves of libraries, or rather would leave very few books on them. Indeed the

The How to Write History.

[1] This is fairly close, I think, but the two first lines, at any rate, are too perfect not to be quoted in their own tongue—

Λουκιανὸς τάδ' ἔγραψε, παλαιά τε μωρά τε εἰδῶς·
μωρὰ γὰρ ἀνθρώποις καὶ τὰ δοκοῦντα σοφά,—

lines which grave themselves on the memory at twenty, and at fifty are only graven deeper.

[2] II. 1-24.

whole tractate, though very sound sense, is in more ways than one a prologue to the *True History*. And from its opening account of the unlucky Abderites and their epidemic of tragedy, through its application of the story of Diogenes rolling his tub, to its demure assertion at the end that the tub *is* rolled, the irony is sufficiently apparent.

If the "How to Write History" is chiefly concerned with matter, the *Lexiphanes*[1] is, with at least equal thoroughness, devoted to words. The comedy here is of a different kind, broader, but hardly less subtle. The play on *αὐχμὸς* ("dry") and *νεοχμὸς* ("newfangled"), the taste which Lexiphanes gives at once of his preciousness by the use of the word *κυψελόβυστα* ("wax-stuffed"), his superb contempt for irony,[2] with his interlocutor's audacious punning and sham reverence, "set" the piece at once for us. The wonderful lingo which Lexiphanes proceeds to pour forth in his "Anti-symposium" is matter for another inquiry than this; but the subsequent criticism of it by Lycinus and Sopolis is quite within our competence. And there is nowhere any sounder prophylactic against one of the recurrent diseases of literature, an access of which has been on us, as it happens, for a considerable time past. There are other diseases, of course—affected archaism, affected purism, &c. But this particular one of "raising language to a higher power," as it has been called by some of those afflicted (and pleased) with it in our days, has never been better characterised. "Before all things," says Lycinus, "prythee remember me this, not to mimic the worst inventions of modern rhetoricians, and smack your lips over them,[3] but to trample on them, and emulate the great classical examples. Nor let the wind-flowers of speech bewitch you, but, after the manner of men in training, stick to solid food. Sacrifice first of all to the Goddess Clearness and to the Graces by whom you are quite deserted. Bid avaunt! to bombast and magniloquence, to tricks of speech. Do not turn up your nose, and strain your voice, and jeer at others, and think that carping at everybody else will put yourself in the front rank. Nay, you have another fault, not small, but perhaps your

The Lexiphanes.

[1] II. 144-152. [2] *τὸν μὲν εἴρωνα πᾶσι καταβαλε.* [3] Or "nibble at them."

greatest, that you do not first arrange the meaning of your expressions, and then dress them up in word and phrase; but if you can pick up anywhere some outlandish locution, or invent one that seems pretty to you, you try to tack a meaning on to it, and are miserable if you cannot stuff it in somewhere, though it may have no necessary connection with what you have to say."[1] It would be impossible to put more forcibly or better the necessary caution, the Devil's Advocate's plea, against the abuse and exaggeration of the doctrine of the "beautiful word."

Other pieces: *The* Prometheus Es.

The "Indictment of the Vowels"[2] is rather a grammatical and rhetorical *jeu d'esprit* than a criticism; but if the curious little piece, "To one who said 'You are the Prometheus of Prose,'"[3] were a little longer and more explicit, it would give us rather a firmer hold of Lucian's serious views of literature than we have actually got. At first he plays, in his usual manner, with the notion of his real or invented flatterer. Are his works called Promethean because they are of clay? He sorrowfully admits the justice of the comparison. Or because they are so clever? This is sarcastic; and besides he has no wish to deserve the Caucasus. After all, too, it is a dubious compliment, for did not a comic writer call Cleon "a Prometheus"? Then he drolls variously on the "potter's art" attributed to him, the slightness of his work, the ease with which it can be smashed, &c. But, perhaps there *is* a complimentary meaning—that Lucian, like Prometheus, is an inventor—that his books are not merely to pattern. He does not altogether reject the soft impeachment, though he hastens (in harmony with that conclusion of the *Lexiphanes* which has been just quoted) to say that mere novelty is no merit in his eyes. And this he proceeds to illustrate, in his own manner, by a story of the black camel and the magpie-coloured man that Ptolemy brought to Egypt, with the result that the Egyptians thought the camel frightful and the magpie-man a rather disgusting joke. But he has, he admits, attempted to adjust the philosophical dialogue to something like the tone of the comic poets, to avoid the faults of both,

[1] *Lex.*, § 24, ii. 152, *op. cit.* [2] I. 26. [3] I. 9.

and to adjust their excellences. At any rate, says he, with one of his inimitable changes, Prometheus was a thief, and he, Lucian, is not. Nobody can call him a plagiarist, and he must stick to his art, such as it is, for otherwise he were Epimetheus if he changed his mind. In this quaint glancing mixture of the serious and the sarcastic, it is possible to guess a good deal, but guessing, as I have ventured to announce pretty prominently, is not the object of this book.

Works touching Rhetoric.

To Rhetoric, as distinguished from literary criticism proper, Lucian's chief (indeed his only considerable and substantive) contribution is the so-called "Master of the Orators,"[1] to which may be added a μελέτη or declamation on one of the stock subjects (a case of tyrannicide) and some parts of the "Twice Accused Man."[2] This last is a curious *pot-pourri* of satire on the different schools of philosophy, on the methods of the law courts, and on forensic eloquence. Rhetoric herself appears, besides an impersonation of Dialogue, both in the character of public prosecutors against "the Syrian." Rhetoric states that he has deserted her for Dialogue, Dialogue that he has disgraced and shamed him by burlesque. Now Lucian, it is hardly necessary to say, was a Syrian, and had been a professional teacher of Rhetoric himself. The piece is chiefly parody, especially in the two speeches just mentioned, where Lucian displays that faculty of causing his characters to make themselves ridiculous, in which he has had no rival (except the authors of the *Satire Menippée* and Butler), to admiration. The reasons given by the "Syrian" for deserting Rhetoric are also very funny.

But the whole has only a partial connection with literature, and is even more concerned with the degradation of the Rhetorical profession than with Rhetoric herself. Incidentally, however, it shows the strong attraction of that subject, warped and mismanaged as it was, for persons with the literary interest in them. If Rhetoric could have seen herself as she ought to be —even as she is in Longinus—it is pretty certain that Lucian would not have said the hard things against her which here appear.

[1] III. 1. [2] II. 358.

The "Master of the Rhetors" or Orators is in the common form of rhetorical treatises, the form of the Περὶ Τ῎ψους itself, that of an address to a young friend. This young friend had asked how a man might become a rhetor and a sophist, a position and title which he thought the noblest of all. Lucian has not the least objection to tell him, so let him listen. He shall climb the steep easily and rest on the heights, while others are tumbling down and cracking their crowns. Let there be no doubt about this. Poetry is a more difficult thing than rhetoric, and did not Hesiod master it by just plucking a few leaves from Helicon? Did not a merchant show Alexander a short cut from Persia to Egypt, only the unbelieving Macedonian would not listen? Lucian will be that merchant.

There are two ways to Rhetoric (see Cebes on another matter). One (to cut short the abundant and agreeable "chaff" of which, here as elsewhere, Lucian is so prodigal) is the long, troublesome, and ungrateful imitation of the mighty men of antiquity, of Plato and Demosthenes and the rest. The other, dealt with more copiously and more ironically still, is quite different. You learn a few fashionable catchwords for ordinary use, and some precious archaisms for occasional ornament; you must get rid of all bashfulness, dress yourself very well, cultivate the vices which happen to be in vogue, or at any rate pretend to them, and keep a good deal of company with women and servants, for both are babblesome and seldom at a loss. There is nothing hard in this and other precepts; and if you observe them, you will soon become a famous orator. Very good fun all of it, and very shrewd "criticism of life," no doubt, but only distantly connected with criticism of literature.

His critical limitations.

Yet it requires no hazardous conjecture to discern a very considerable literary critic in Lucian, and to discover the reason why that critic did not come out in himself or in his contemporaries, unless we are to rank the lonely and magnificent personality of Longinus among these. There was interesting literature in Lucian's time—it is enough to mention the name of Apuleius to establish that proposition—but hardly any of it was exactly great, and the best of it was marred, either by the negative tendency which is one

side of despair of greatness, or else by the hectic colours of decadence, or by the dubious struggles of new tendencies not yet quite ready to be born. Lucian himself (at any rate, after that youth of which we know so little) inclined, it is not necessary to say, to the negative side. He was distinctly deficient in enthusiasm (with which, perhaps, the critical artist can dispense as little as the creative), and had small feeling for poetry. His admiration for the great Attic prose writers, and its result in his own delightful style, are obvious enough; while the justice, if also the rigour, of his onslaughts on the characteristics most opposed to theirs, the characteristics of florid, "conceited," neologistic prose and verse, cannot be denied. But the unsatisfactory negation of his religious and philosophical criticism extends also to his literary attitude. "Cannot you," one feels inclined to say, "find something to say *for* as well as against luxuriance of fancy, wealth of colour, delicate suggestiveness of thought and phrase?" Cannot you, like Longinus, admit that Nature meant men to think and write magnificently of the magnificent? He could not, or he would not: his very interest in literature as literature seems to have been lukewarm. And so the greatest writer of all the later Greeks, a writer great enough to rank with all but the very greatest of the earlier, gives us very little but carping criticism of literature, and not much even of that.

Longinus: the difficulties raised.

It does not fall within the plan of this work to examine at any length the recently much-debated question whether the treatise Περὶ Ὕψους is, as after its first publication by Robortello in 1554 it was for nearly three centuries unquestioningly taken to be, the work of the rhetorician Longinus, who was Queen Zenobia's Prime Minister, and was put to death by Aurelian. It has been the mania of the nineteenth century to prove that everybody's work was written by somebody else, and it will not be the most useless task of the twentieth to betake itself to more profitable inquiries. References which will enable any one who cares to investigate the matter are given in a note.[1] Here it may be sufficient to

[1] The most elaborate discussion of the whole matter still is that of Vaucher (Geneva, 1854). The editions I myself use are those of Toup (Oxford,

say two things. The first is, that these questions appertain for settlement, less to the technical expert than to the intelligent *judex*, the half-juryman, half-judge, who is generally acquainted with the rules of logic and the laws of evidence. The second is, that the verdict of the majority of such *judices* on this particular question is, until some entirely new documents turn up, likely to be couched in something like the following form:—

1. The positive evidence for the authorship of Longinus is very weak, consisting in MS. attributions, the oldest of which[1] is irresolute in form, while it certainly does not date earlier than the tenth century.

2. There is absolutely no *evidence* against the authorship of Longinus, only a set of presumptions, most of which are sheer opinion, and carry no weight except as such. Moreover, no plausible competitor has even been hinted at. I hope it is not illiberal to say that the suggestion of Plutarch, which was made by Vaucher, and has met with some favour, carries with it irresistible evidence that the persons who make it know little about criticism. No two things could possibly be more different than the amiable ethical knack of the author of the *Moralia*, and the intense literary gift of the author of the Περὶ Ὕψους.

Another of the "Academic questions" connected with the book, however, is of more literary importance, and that is its proper designation in the modern languages. There has been a consensus of the best authorities of late years, even though they may not agree on other points, that "The Sublime" is a far from happy translation of ὕψος. Not only has "Sublime" in the modern languages, and especially in English, a signification too much specialised, but the specialisation is partly in the wrong direction. No one, for instance, who

"*Sublimity.*"

1778); Egger (Paris, 1837), a particularly handy little volume, *with the fragments*; and Prof. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge, 1899), with translation and full editorial apparatus. Those who do not read the Greek lose much: but they will find a good (though somewhat too free) translation, with an excellent introduction by Mr Andrew Lang, in the work of Mr H. L. Havell (London, 1890).

[1] Διονυσίου ἢ Λογγίνου of the Paris MS. 2036. (Others even have ἀνωνύμου.) Robortello intentionally or unintentionally dropped the ἤ, thereby putting students off the scent.

uses English correctly, however great his enthusiasm for the magnificent Sapphic ode which Longinus has had the well-deserved good fortune to preserve to us, would call it exactly sublime,[1] there being, in the English connotation of that word, an element of calmness, or at any rate (for a storm may be sublime) of mastery, which is absent here. And so in other cases; "Sublime" being more especially unfortunate in bringing out (what no doubt remains to some extent in any case) the inadequateness and tautology of the attempts to define the *sources* of ὕψος. Hall, the seventeenth-century translator, avoided these difficulties by a simple rendering, "the height of eloquence," which is more than literally exact, though it is neither elegant nor handy. Nor is there perhaps any single word that is not open to almost as many objections as Sublime itself. So that (and again this is the common conclusion) it is well to keep it, with a very careful preliminary explanation that the Longinian Sublime is not sublimity in its narrower sense, but all that quality, or combination of qualities, which creates *enthusiasm* in literature, all that gives *consummateness* to it, all that deserves the highest critical encomium either in prose or poetry.

Quality and contents of the treatise.

Few persons, however, whom the gods have made critical will care to spend much time *in limine* over the authorship, the date,[2] the title, and the other beggarly elements in respect to this astonishing treatise. Incomplete as it is—and its incompleteness is as evident as that of the *Poetics*, and probably not much less substantial—difficult as are some of its terms, deprived as we are in some cases of the power of appreciating its citations fully, through our ignorance of their context, puzzled as we may even be now and then by that radical difference in taste and view-point, that "great gulf fixed," which sometimes, though only sometimes, does interpose itself between modern and ancient,—no student of criticism, hardly one would think any fairly educated and intelligent man, can read a dozen

[1] Blair saw this, but, with the ill-luck of his century, regarded the work as merely "elegant."

[2] Longinus († 213-273) represents the middle of the *third* century. Nobody puts it later than this, and nobody earlier than the *first*.

lines of the book without finding himself in a new world, as he compares it with even the best of his earlier critical masters. He is in the presence of a man who has accidentally far greater advantages of field than Aristotle, essentially far more powerful genius, and an intenser appreciation of literature, than Dionysius or Quintilian. And probably the first thought—not of the student, who will be prepared for it, but of the fairly educated man who knows something of Pope and Boileau and the rest of them—will be, "How on earth did this book come to be quoted as an authority by a school like that of the 'classical' critics of the seventeenth-eighteenth century, whose every principle almost, whose general opinions certainly, it seems to have been designedly written to crush, conclude, and quell?" Of this more hereafter. Let us begin, as in former important cases, by a short abstract of the actual contents of the book.

The author commences by addressing a young friend or pupil, a certain Postumius (Terentianus or Florentianus?), on the inefficiency of the Treatise on the Sublime by a certain Cæcilius.[1] In endeavouring to provide something more satisfactory, especially as to the sources of Sublimity, he premises little more in the shape of definition than that it is "a certain consummateness and eminence" of words, completing this with the remark (the first epoch-making one of the treatise) that the effect of such things is "not persuasion but transport,"[2] not the result of skill, pains, and arrangement, but something which, "opportunely out-flung,"[3] carries everything before it. But can it be taught? Is it not innate? The doubt implies a fallacy. Nature is necessary, but it must be guided and helped by art. Then comes a gap, a specially annoying one, since the farther shore lands us in the midst of an unfavourable criticism of a passage supposed to come from the lost *Orithyia* of Æschylus, which is succeeded by, or grouped with, other specimens of the false sublime, bombast, tumidity, and

[1] A Sicilian rhetor, probably of Calacte, said by Suidas to have been of Greek, or at any rate non-Roman, birth, and a Jew in religion. Dionysius knew him, and he lived in the time of Augustus. There was another (confused by Suidas) in that of Hadrian. This *may* be our C.

[2] *οὐ γὰρ εἰς πειθὼ ἀλλ' ἐις ἔκστασιν ἄγει τὰ ὑπερφυᾶ.*

[3] *καιρίως ἐξενεχθέν.*

the *parenthurson*.[1] Next we pass to "frigidity," a term which Longinus uses with a slightly different connotation from Aristotle's, applying it chiefly to what he thinks undue flings and quips and conceits. These particular strictures are, in Chapter V., generalised off into a brief but admirable censure of the quest for mere novelty, of that "horror of the obvious" which bad taste at all times has taken for a virtue. To cure this and other faults, there is nothing for it but to make for the true Sublime, hard as it may be. For (again a memorable and epoch-making saying) "the judgment of words is the latest begotten fruit of many an attempt."[2]

The first canon of sublimity is not unlike the famous *Quod Semper*, &c. If a thing does not transport *at all*, it is certainly not Sublime. If its transporting power fails with repetition, with submission to different but still competent judges, it is not sublime. When men different in habits, lives, aims, ages, speech, agree about it, then no mistake is possible.

The sources of Sublimity are next defined as five in number: Command of strong and manly thought; Vehement and enthusiastic passion—these are congenital; Skilfulness with Figures; Nobility of phrase; Dignified and elevated *ordonnance*.[3] These, after a rebuke of some length to Cæcilius for omitting Passion, he proceeds to discuss seriatim. The ἀδρεπήβολον, which he now calls "great-naturedness,"[4] holds the first place in value as in order, and examples of it, and of the failure to reach it, are given from many writers, Homer and "the Legislator of the Jews" being specially praised. This laudation leads to one of the best known and most interesting passages of the whole book, a short criticism and comparison of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, whereon, as on other things in this abstract, more

[1] A phrase of the rhetor Theodorus, meaning "the thyrsus poked in at the wrong time," "enthusiasm out of place."

[2] λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστι πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγέννημα. Dionysius (*v. supra*, pp. 130, 131) had said as much in sense, but less magisterially in phrase. I have translated λόγων in its narrowest equivalent, instead of "style" or "literature," which it doubtless also means, in order to bring out the antithesis better. I have small doubt that Longinus meant, here as elsewhere, to fling back the old contempt of the opposition of "words" and "things."

[3] This word, which has the stamp of Dryden, is often preferable to "*composition*."

[4] τὸ μεγαλοφυές.

hereafter. The interest certainly does not sink with the quotation from Sappho, whether we agree or not (again *vide post*) that the source of its charm is "the selection and composition of her details." Other typical passages are then cited and criticised.

We next come to Amplification,—almost the first evidence in the treatise, and not a fatal one, of the numbing power of "Figures." Longinus takes occasion by it for many illuminative animadversions, not merely on Homer, but on Plato, Herodotus, Demosthenes, and Thucydides, whom (it is very satisfactory to observe) he includes among those who have "sublimity" This handling of Figures, professedly eclectic, is fertile in such animadversions in regard to others besides Amplification — Hyperbata, Polyptota, Antimetathesis, and others still — with especial attention to Periphrasis, to his praise of which the eighteenth century perhaps attended without due attention to his cautions.

Then comes another of the flashes of light. Dismissing the figures, he turns to diction in itself, and has a wonderful passage on it, culminating in the dictum, "For beautiful words are in deed and in fact the very light of the spirit,"[1]—the Declaration of Independence and the "Let there be light" at once of Literary Criticism.

Here the Enemy seems to have thought that he was getting too good, for another and greater gap occurs, and when we are allowed to read again, we are back among the Figures and dealing with Metaphor—the criticism of examples, however, being still illuminative. It leads him, moreover, to another of his nugget-grounds, the discussion on "Faultlessness," which introduces some especially valuable parallels—Apollonius and Homer, Bacchylides and Pindar, Ion and Sophocles, Hyperides and Demosthenes, Lysias and Plato. Then we pass to the figure Hyperbole after a gap, and then to *ordonnance* and arrangement, with a passage, valuable but, like all similar passages in the ancient critics, difficult, on rhythm. After this a section on μικρότης — "littleness," "triviality"—leads abruptly to the close, which is not the close, and which, after

[1] φῶς γὰρ τῷ ὄντι ἴδιον τοῦ νοῦ τὰ καλὰ ὀνόματα.

some extremely interesting remarks on the ethical and other conditions of the time, ends with an unfulfilled promise of treating the subject of the Passions. The loss of this is perhaps more to be regretted than the loss of any other single tractate of the kind in antiquity. It might have been, and possibly was, only a freshening up of the usual rhetorical commonplaces about the "colours of good and evil," and the probable disposition of the hearer or reader. But it might also, and from Longinus's handling of the other stock subject of the Figures it is much more likely to, have been something mainly, if not wholly, new: in fact, something that to this day we have not got—an analysis of the direct appeals of literature to the primary emotions of the soul.

In considering this inestimable book, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of these early words of it to which attention has been drawn above. The yoke of "persuasion" has at last been broken from the neck of the critic. He does not consider literature as something which will help a man to carry an assembly with him, to persuade a jury, to gain a declamation prize. He does indeed still mention the listener rather than the reader; but that is partly tradition, partly a consequence of the still existing prevalence of recitation or reading aloud. Further, it is sufficiently evident that the critic has come to regard literature as a whole, and is not distracted by supposed requirements of "invention" on the part of the poet, of "persuasion" on the part of the orator, and so forth. He looks at the true and only test of literary greatness — the "transport," the absorption of the reader. And he sees as no one, so far as we know, saw before him (except Dionysius for a moment and "in a glass darkly"), as Dante was the only man after him to see for a millennium and much more, that the beautiful words, the "mots rayonnants," are at least a main means whereby this effect is produced. Instead of style and its criticism being dismissed, or admitted at best with impatience as something φορτικόν, we have that gravest and truest judgment of the latter as the latest-born offspring of many a painful endeavour. Far is it indeed from him to stick to the word only: his remarks on

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novelty, his peroration (not intended as such, but so coming to us), and many other things, are proof of that. But in the main his criticism is of the pure æsthetic kind, and of the best of that kind. It will not delay us too much to examine it a little more in detail.

Detailed Criticism: The opening.

The opening passage as to Cæcilius, though it has tempted some into perilous hypothetic reconstructions of that critic's possible teaching, really comes to little more than this—that Longinus, like most of us, was not exactly satisfied with another man's handling of his favourite subject. And, curiously enough, the only specific fault that he here finds—namely, that his predecessor, while illustrating the nature of the Sublime amply, neglected to discuss the means of reaching it—rather recoils on himself. For there can be little doubt that the weakest part of the Περὶ Ὕψους is its discussion of "sources." But the great phrase, already more than once referred to, as to transport or ecstasy, not persuasion, lifts us at once—itself transports us—into a region entirely different from that of all preceding Rhetorics, without at the same time giving any reason to fear loss of touch with the common ground and common-sense. For nothing can be saner than the handling, in the second chapter, of that *aporia* concerning nature and art, genius and painstaking, which has not infrequently been the cause of anything but sane writing.

The stricture on the Orithyia.

After the gap, however, we come to one of the passages recently glanced at, and mentioned or to be mentioned so often elsewhere, which warn us as to difference of view. The passage, supposed to be, as we said, Æschylean and from the *Orithyia*, is no doubt at rather more than "concert-pitch." It is Marlowe rather than Shakespeare; yet Shakespeare himself has come near to it in *Lear* and elsewhere, and one line at least—

μίαν παρείρας πλεκτάνην χειμάρροον—

is a really splendid piece of metre and phrase, worthy, high-pitched as it is, of the author of the *Oresteia* and the *Prometheus* at his very best. So, too, the much-enduring Gorgias would hardly have received very severe reprehension from any but the extremest

precisians of modern criticism, at its most starched time, for calling vultures "living tombs." But the horror of the Greeks on the one hand for anything extravagant, bizarre, out of measure, on the other for the slightest approach in serious work to the unbecoming, the unpleasantly suggestive, makes Longinus here a very little prudish. And his general remarks are excellent, especially in reference to τὸ παρένθυρσον, which I have ventured to interpret, not quite in accordance with the general rendering, "the poking in of the thyrsus at the wrong time," the affectation of Bacchanalian fury where no fury need be.

Frigidity.

But we still have the same warning in the chapter on Frigidity, coupled with another—that, perhaps, as sometimes happens, Longinus' sense of humour was not quite equal to his sense of sublimity, and yet another —that the historic sense, so late developed everywhere, was, perhaps, not very strong in him. We, at least, should give Timæus the benefit of a doubt, as to the presence of a certain not inexcusable irony in the comparison (in which, for instance, neither Swift nor Carlyle would have hesitated to indulge) of the times taken by Alexander to conquer Asia and by Isocrates to write the *Panegyric*. On the other hand, he seems to forget the date of Timæus when he finds the μικροχαρές, the paltrily funny, in the historian's connection of the Athenian Hermocopidæ and their punishment by Hermocrates, the son of Hermon. There is no reason why Timæus should not have been quite serious, though in the third century after Christ, and even in the first, the allusion might seem either a tasteless freethinking jest or a silly piece of superstition.

The "maidens in the eyes."

But by far the most interesting thing in this context is Longinus' irreconcilable objection to a fanciful metaphor which, as it happens most oddly, was, with a very slight variation, an equal pet of the Greeks of the great age and of our own Elizabethans. Every reader of the latter knows the phrase, "to look babies in the eyes" of the beloved—that is to say, to keep the face so close to hers that the little reflections of the gazer in the pupils of her eyes are discernible. The Greek term for these little images, and the pupils that mirrored them, was slightly different

—it was κόραι, maidens. And as, from the famous quarrel scene in Homer downwards, the eyes were always, in Greek literature, the seat of modesty or of impudence, the combination suggested, not merely to Timæus but even to Xenophon, a play of words, "more modest than the maidens in their eyes," or conversely, as where Timæus, speaking of the lawless lust of Agathocles, says that he must have had "harlots" (πόρνας), not "maidens" (κόρας), in his eyes. And Longinus is even more angry or sad with Xenophon than with Timæus, as expecting more propriety from him.

But whether we agree with him in detail or not, the inestimable passage, on the mere quest and craze for novelty, which follows, more than reconciles us, as well as the other great saying in cap. vi. as to the "late-born" character of the judgment of style, and that in the next as to the canon of Sublimity being the effect produced unaltered in altered circumstances and cases. When we read these things we feel that literary criticism is at last fully constituted,—that it wants nothing more save greater variety, quantity, and continuance of literary creation, upon which to exercise itself.

The canon "Quod semper."

No nervous check or chill need be caused by the tolerably certain fact that more than one hole may be picked in the subsequent classification of the sources[1] of ὕψος. These attempts at an over-methodical classification (it has been said before) are always full of snares and pitfalls to the critic. Especially do they tempt him to the sin of arguing in a circle. It cannot be denied that in every one of the five divisions (except, perhaps, the valuable vindication of the quality of Passion) there is some treacherous word or other, which is a mere synonym of "sublime." Thus in the first we have ἀδρεπήβολον, mastery of the ἄδρον, a curious word, the nearest equivalent of which in English is, perhaps, "stout" or

The sources of sublimity.

[1] It may, however, be plausibly argued that the circle is more apparent than real, resulting from a kind of ambiguity in the word πηγαί. If Longinus had slightly altered his expression, so as to make it something of this kind, "There are five points [or ways, or aspects] in which ὕψος may be attained, thought, feeling, 'figure,' diction, and composition," he would be much less vulnerable. And, after all, this is probably what he meant.

"full-bodied," as we apply these terms to wine; in the fourth γενναία, "noble," which is only "sublime" in disguise; and in the fifth ἀξίωμα καὶ δίαρσις, of which much the same may be said.

Any suggestion, however, of paralogism which might arise from this and be confirmed by the curious introduction in the third of the Figures, as if they were machines for automatic sublime-coining, must be dispelled by the remarks on Passion of the right kind as tending to sublimity, and by the special stress laid on the primary necessity of μεγαλοφροσύνη, whereof ὕψος itself is the mere ἀπήχημα or echo. Unfortunately here, as so often, the gap comes just in the most important place.

When the cloud lifts, however, we find ourselves in one of the most interesting passages of the whole, the selection of "sublime" passages from Homer. A little superfluous matter about Homer's "impiety" (the old, the respectable, Platonic mistake) occurs; but it matters not, especially in face of the two praises of the "Let there be light" of the Jewish legislator, "no chance comer," and of the great ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον of Ajax, the mere juxtaposition of which once more shows what a critic we have got in our hands.

Not quite such a great one perhaps have we—yet one in the circumstances equally fascinating—in the contrasted remarks on the *Odyssey*. Longinus is not himself impious; he is no Separatist (he is indeed far too good a critic to be that). But he will have the Romance of Ulysses to be "old age, though the old age of Homer." "When a great nature is a little gone under, philomythia is characteristic of its decline."[1] Evidently, he thinks, the *Odyssey* was Homer's second subject, not his first. He is "a setting sun as mighty as ever, but less intense": he is more unequal: he takes to the fabulous and the incredible. The Wine of Circe, the foodless voyage of Ulysses, the killing of the suitors—nay, the very attention paid to Character and Manners—tell the tale of decadence.

Longinus on Homer.

He is wrong, undoubtedly wrong—we may swear it boldly by those who fell in Lyonnesse, and in the palace of Atli, and under the echoes of the horn of Roland. The *Odyssey* is not

[1] μεγάλης φύσεως ὑποφερομένης ἤδη ἴδιόν ἐστιν ἐν γήρᾳ τὸ φιλύμνθον.

ess than the *Iliad;* it is different. But we can hardly quarrel with him for being wrong, because his error is so instructive, so nteresting. We see in it first (even side by side with not a ittle innovation) that clinging to the great doctrines of old, to he skirts of Aristotle and of Plato, which is so often found in ıoble minds and so seldom in base ones. And we see, moreover, hat far as he had advanced—near as he was to an actual peep ver the verge of the old world and into the new—he was still ı Greek himself at heart, with the foibles and limitations—no lespicable foibles and limitations—of the race. Here is the nstinctive unreasoning terror of the unknown Romance; the lislike of the vague and the fabulous; even that curious craze bout Character being in some way inferior to Action, which we ıave seen before. By the time of Longinus—if he lived in the hird century certainly, if he lived in the first probably—the omance did exist. But it was looked upon askance; it had no egular literary rank; and a sort of resentment was apparently elt at its daring to claim equality with the epic. Now the *Odyssey* is the first, and not far from the greatest, of romances. t has the Romantic Unity in the endurance and triumph of ts hero. It has the Romantic Passion in the episodes f Circe and Calypso and others: above all, it has the great Romantic breadth, the free sweep of scene and subject, the ariety, the contrast of fact and fancy, the sparkle and hurry nd throb. But these things, to men trained in the admiration f the *other* Unity, the *other* Passion, the more formal, regulated, imited, measured detail and incident of the usual tragedy and he usual epic—were at best unfamiliar innovations, and at worst horrible and daring impieties. Longinus will not go this ength: he cannot help seeing the beauty of the *Odyssey*. But ıe must reconcile his principles to his feelings by inventing a heory of decadence, for which, to speak frankly, there is no ritical justification at all.

On Sappho.

One may almost equally disagree with the *special* criticism which serves as setting to the great jewel among the quotations of the treatise, the so-called "Ode to Anactoria." The charm of this wonderful piece consists, accord-ing to Longinus, in the skill with which Sappho chooses

the accompanying emotions of "erotic mania."[1] To which one may answer, "Hardly so," but in the skill with which she expresses those emotions which she selects, and in the wonderful adaptation of the metre to the expression, in the mastery of the picture of the most favoured lover, drawing close and closer to the beloved to catch the sweet speech,[2] and the laughter full of desire. In saying this we should have the support of the Longinus of other parts of the treatise against the Longinus of this. Yet here, too, he is illuminative; here, too, the "noble error" of the Aristotelian conception of poetry distinguishes and acquits him.

"*Amplification.*"

With the remarks on *αὔξησις*, "amplification," as it is traditionally but by no means satisfactorily rendered, another phase of the critical disease of antiquity (which is no doubt balanced by other diseases in the modern critical body) may be thought to appear. Both in the definition of this figure and in the description of its method we may, not too suspiciously, detect evidences of that excessive technicality which gave to Rhetoric itself the exclusive title of *techne*. *Auxesis*, it seems, comes in when the business, or the point at issue, admits at its various stages of divers fresh starts and rests, of one great phrase being wheeled upon the stage after another, continually introduced in regular ascent.[3] This, it seems, can be done either by means of *τοπηγορία*, "handling of *topoi* or commonplaces," or by *δείνωσις*, which may perhaps be best rendered *tour de force*, or by cunning successive disposition (*ἐποικονομία*) of facts or feelings. For, says he, there are ten thousand kinds of *auxesis*.

The first description of the method will recall to all comparative students of literature the manner of Burke, though it is not exactly identical with that manner; but the instances of means, besides being admittedly inadequate, savour, with their technicalities of terminology, much too strongly of the

[1] Literal.

[2] Fond and foolish fancy as it may be, there seems to me something miraculous in the mere juxtaposition of πλησίον and ἀδύ — the silent adoring lover, jealous, as it were, of the very air robbing him of a portion of the sweetness.

[3] *ἕτερα ἑτέροις ἐπεισκυκλοίμενα μεγέθη συνεχῶς ἐπεισαγηται κατ' ἐπίβασιν.*

cut-and-dried manual. The third article, on a reasonable interpretation of *ἐποικονομία*, really includes all that need be said. But one sees here, as later, that even Longinus had not quite outgrown the notion that the teacher of Rhetoric was bound to present his student with a sort of hand-list of "tips" and dodges—with the kind of Cabbala wherewith the old-fashioned crammer used to supply his pupils for inscription on wristband or finger-nail. Yet he hastens to give a sign of grace by avowing his dissatisfaction with the usual Rhetorical view, and by distinguishing *auxesis* and the Sublime itself, in a manner which brings the former still nearer to Burke's "winding into a subject like a serpent," and which might have been more edifying still if one of the usual gaps did not occur. Part, at least, of the lost matter must have been occupied with a contrast or comparison between the methods of Plato and Demosthenes, the end of which we have, and which passes into one between Demosthenes and Cicero. "If we Greeks may be allowed to have an opinion," says Longinus, with demure humility, "Demosthenes shall be compared to a flash of thunder and lightning, Cicero to an ordinary terrestrial conflagration," which is very handsome to Cicero.

Then he returns to Plato, and rightly insists that much of his splendour is derived from imitation, or at least from emulation, of that very Homer whom he so often attacks. The great writers of the past are to be constantly before us, and we are not to be deterred from "letting ourselves go" by any mistaken sense of inferiority, or any dread of posterity's verdict.

Then comes a digression of extreme importance on the subject of *φαντασίαι* or *εἰδωλοποιΐαι*—"images." One of the points in which a history of the kind here attempted may prove to be of most service, lies in the opportunity it affords of keeping the changes of certain terms, commonly used in criticism, more clearly before the mind than has always been done. And of these, none requires more care than "Images" and "Imagination." At the first reading, the mere use of such a word as *φαντασίαι* may seem to make all overscrupulousness unnecessary, though if we remember that even Fancy is not quite Imagination, the danger may be lessened.

"*Images.*"

At any rate, it is nearly certain that no ancient writer,[1] and no modern critic before a very recent period (Shakespeare uses it rightly, but then he was Shakespeare and not a critic), attached our full sense to the term. To Aristotle *φαντασία* is merely *αἴσθησις ἀσθενὴς*, a "weakened sensation," a copy furnished by memory from sensation itself. Even animals have it. No idea of Invention seems to have mingled with it, or only of such invention as the artist's is when he faithfully represents natural objects. Of the Imagination, which is in our minds when we call Shelley an imaginative poet, and Pope not one, Sir Edward Burne Jones an imaginative painter, and any contemporary whom it may be least invidious to name not one, there does not seem to have been a trace even in the enthusiastic mind of Longinus, though he expressly includes Enthusiasm—nay, Passion—in his notion of it. You think you see what you say, and you make your hearers see it. Good; but Crabbe does that constantly, and one would hardly, save in the rarest cases, call Crabbe imaginative. In short, *φαντασίαι* here are vivid illustrations drawn from nature—Orestes' hallucination of the Eumenides, Euripides' picture of Phaethon, that in the *Seven* of the slaying of the bull over the black-bound shield, and many others. No doubt he glances at the fabulous and incredible, the actually "imagined"; but he seems, as in the case of the *Odyssey*, to be a little doubtful of these even in poetry, while in oratory he bars them altogether. You must at one and the same time reason and illustrate—again the very method of Burke.

The Figures.

In the rest of the illustrations of the use of Figures—for the central part of the treatise expressly disclaims being a formal discussion of these idols—the positive literary criticisms scattered in them—the actual "reviewing"—will give most of the interest. The great Oath of Demosthenes, "By those who fell at Marathon!" with its possible suggestion by a passage of Eupolis, supplies a whole chapter and part of another. And now we find the curious expression (showing how even Longinus was juggled by terms) that Figures "fight on the side of the Sublime, and in turn draw a wonderful rein-

[1] On the exception to be made for Philostratus, see above, p. 120.

forcement from it," wherein a mighty if vague reality like the Sublime, and mere shadows (though neatly cut-out shadows) like the Figures, are most quaintly yoked together.

Though still harassed by gaps, we find plenty of good pasture in the remarks, the handling of Periphrasis being especially attractive. For the eighteenth century—the time which honoured Longinus most in theory, and went against him most in practice—undoubtedly took part of his advice as to this figure. It had no doubt that Periphrasis contributed to the Sublime, was *ὑψηλοποιόν*: unluckily it paid less attention to his subsequent caution, that it is a risky affair, and that it smells of triviality.[1] In fact, it is extremely noticeable that in the examples of Periphrasis which he praises we should hardly apply that name to it, but should call it "Allusion" or "Metaphor," while the examples that he condemns are actually of the character of Armstrong's "gelid cistern" and Delille's "game which Palamede invented."

At no time perhaps has the tricksy, if not (as one is almost driven to suspect) deliberately malignant, mutilator played such a trick as in abstracting four leaves from the MS. between caps. xxx. and xxxi. Here Longinus has begun to speak of diction generally; here he has made that admirable descant on "beautiful words" which, though almost all the book deserves to be written in letters of gold, would tempt one to indulge here in precious stones, so as to mimic, in jacinth and sapphire and chrysoprase, the effect which it celebrates. When we are permitted another glimpse we are back in particular criticism, interesting but less valuable save indirectly, and in criticisms, too, of Cæcilius, criticisms which we could do without. No great good can ever come of inquiries, at least general inquiries, into the permissible number and the permissible strength of Metaphors. Once more we may fall back on the Master, though perhaps rather in opposition to some of the Master's dicta in this very field. "As the intelligent man shall decide" is the decision here, and the intelligent man will never decide till the case is before him. One bad metaphor is

[1] *ἐπίκηρον πρᾶγμα . . . κουφολογίας ὄζον. ἐπίκηρος* means literally "perishable," "apt to go off," to get stale or flat.

too much: twenty good ones are not too many. Nor is "the multitudinous seas incarnadine" an "excess," though no doubt there have been bad critics who thought so.

Longinus himself, though he had not had the happiness to read *Macbeth*, was clearly not far out of agreement with the concluding sentiment of the last paragraph, and he makes this certain by the disquisition on Faultlessness which follows. As a general question this is probably, for the present time at any rate, past argument, not so much because the possibility of a "faultless" great poem is denied, as because under the leaden rule of the best modern criticism—leaden not from dulness but from adaptability—few things are recognised as "faults" *in se* and *per se*. A pun may be a gross fault in one place and a grace beyond the reach of art in another: an aposiopesis may be either a proof of clumsy inequality to the situation or a stroke of genius. But the declaration of Longinus that he is not on the side of Faultlessness[1] is of infinitely greater importance than any such declaration from an equally great critic ("Where is he? Show him to me," as Rabelais would say) could possess to-day. The general Greek theory undoubtedly did make for excessive severity to faultfulness, just as our general theory makes perhaps for undue leniency to it. That Longinus could withstand this tendency—could point out the faults of the faultless—was a very great thing.

"Faultlessness."

As always, too, his individual remarks frequently give us, not merely the satisfaction of agreement, but that of piquant difference or curiosity. We may agree with him about Bacchylides and Pindar—though, by the way, the man who had the taste and the courage to admire a girl as χλωραύχενα—as possessing that yellow ivory tint of skin which lights so magnificently[2]—was certainly one to dare to challenge convention with what its lilies-and-roses standard must have thought a "fault." But we cannot help astonishment at being told that both Pindar and

[1] ἐγὼ δ' οἶδα μὲν ὡς αἱ ὑπερμεγέθεις φύσεις ἥκιστα καθαραί.

[2] Simonides had used the word literally of the nightingale, and there are those who hold that Bacchylides merely meant to compliment the lady's *voice*. But let us think more nobly of him.

Sophocles "often have their light quenched without any obvious reason, and stumble in the most unfortunate manner."[1] For those of us who are less, as well as those who are more, enthusiastic about Sophocles would probably agree in asking, "Where does he 'go out in snuff,' where does he 'fall prostrate' in this fashion?" Surely all the faults cannot be in the lost plays! We want a rather fuller text of Hyperides than we possess to enable us quite to appreciate the justice of the comparison of him with Demosthenes, but that justice is striking even on what we have. On the other hand, we are rather thrown out by the contrast of Plato and Lysias — it may be owing to the same cause. Even if the comparison were one of style only, we should think it odd to make one between Burke and Berkeley, though the *Sublime and Beautiful* would help us a little here.

But all this is a digression,[2] and the author seems to have returned to his Metaphors (in a gap where the demon has interfered with less malice than usual), and to Hyperboles, under the head of which we get a useful touch of contempt for Isocrates.[3] We are in deeper and more living waters when we come to the handling, alas! too brief (though nothing seems here to be lost), of *ordonnance*, "composition," selection and arrangement of words. Here is yet another of those great law-making phrases which are the charter of a new criticism. "Harmony is to men not only physically connected with persuasion and pleasure, but a wonderful instrument of magniloquence and passion." It may be difficult for us, with our very slight knowledge (it would, perhaps, be wiser to say almost absolute ignorance) of Greek pronunciation, to appreciate his illustrations here in detail. But we can appreciate the principle of them exactly, and apply that principle, in any language of which we do know the pronunciation, with perfect ease and the completest success.

Hyperboles.

"Harmony."

[1] *σβέννυνται δε ἀλόγως πολλάκις, καὶ πίπτουσιν ἀτυχέστατα.*

[2] I must be allowed to say that it contains one of the most ambitious and successful passages of Longinus as an original writer—the vindication of Nature's command to man to admire the magnificent—in cap. xxxv. It is a temptation to quote it.

[3] *οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως παιδὸς πρᾶγμα ἔπαθεν διὰ τὴν τοῦ πάντα αὐξητικῶς ἐθέλειν λέγειν φιλοτιμίαν.*

The silly critics (they exist at the present day) who pooh-pooh, as niceties and fiddle-faddle, the order of words, the application of rhythmical tests to prose, and the like, are answered here beforehand with convincing force by a critic whom no one can possibly charge with preferring sound to sense.

This refers to prose, but the following chapter carries out the same principle as to poetry with equal acuteness. Longinus, great as his name is, probably is but little in the hands of those who object (sometimes almost with foam at the mouth) to the practice of analysing the mere harmonic effect of poetry. But it is pleasant to think of these passages when one reads the out-cries, nor is the pleasantness rendered less pleasant by the subsequent cautions against that over-rhythmical fashion of writing which falls to the level of mere dance-music.

The caution against over-conciseness and over-prolixity is rather more of a matter of course, and the strictures on the μικρότης, occasionally to be found in Herodotus, like some in the earlier parts of the treatise, sometimes elude us, as is the case with similar verbal criticisms even in languages with which we are colloquially familiar.

The Conclusion.

And then there is the curious Conclusion which, as we have said, is no conclusion at all, as it would seem, and which yet has an unmistakable air of "peroration, with [much] circumstance," on the everlasting question, "Why is the Sublime so rare in our time?" In that day, as in this, we learn (the fact being, as in King Charles II.'s fish-experiment, taken for granted), divers explanations, chiefly political, were given for the fact. Democracy was a good nurse of greatness: aristocracy was not. But Longinus did not agree. It was money-getting and money-seeking, pleasure-loving and pleasure-hunting, he thought. Plain living and high thinking must be returned to if the Heights were to be once more scaled. A noble conclusion, if perhaps only a generous fallacy. Had Longinus had our illegitimate prerogative-*post*rogative of experience, he would have known that the blowing of the wind of the spirit admits of no such explanations as these. Ages of Liberty and Ages of Servitude, Ages of Luxury and Ages

of Simplicity, Ages of Faith and Ages of Freethought — all give us the Sublime if the right man is there: none will give it us if he is not. But our critic had not the full premisses before him, and we could not expect the adequate conclusion.

Yet how great a book have we here! Of the partly otiose disputes about its date and origin and authorship one or two things are worth recalling, though for other purposes than those of the disputants. Let it be remembered that it is not quoted, or even referred to, by a single writer of antiquity.[1] There is absolutely no evidence for it, except its own internal character, before the date of its oldest manuscript, which is assigned to the tenth century. Even if, assuming it to be the work of Longinus, we suppose it to have been part of one of the works which *are* ascribed to him (a possible assumption, see note), there is still the absence of quotation, still the absence even of reference to views so clearly formulated, so eloquently enforced, and in some ways so remarkably different from those of the usual Greek and Roman rhetorician. That the book can be of very late date—much later, that is to say, than that of Longinus himself—is almost impossible. One of its features, the lack of any reference to even a single writer later than the first century, has indeed been relied upon to prove that it is not later itself than that date. This is inconclusive for that purpose. But it makes every succeeding century less and less probable, while the style, though in some respects peculiar, is not in the least Byzantine.

This detachment from any particular age—nay, more, this *vita fallens*, this unrecognised existence of a book so remarkable—stands in no merely fanciful relation to the characteristics of the book itself. It abides alone in thought as well as in history. That it is a genuine, if a late, production of the classical or semi-classical age we cannot reasonably doubt, for a multitude of reasons, small in themselves but strong in a

[1] "John of Sicily" (Walz, vi. 225), who in the thirteenth century cites the lost φιλόλογοι ὁμιλίαι almost as if he was citing the Περὶ Ὕψους, is certainly no exception. The undated Byzantine (Cramer, *Anecd. Oxon.*, iii. 159, quoted by Professor Roberts after Usener), who couples Λογγίνου κρίσεις with those of Dionysius, may come nearer, as may the anonymous scholiast on Hermogenes (Walz, vii. 963), who cites the ὁμιλίαι on τὸ στομφῶδες, "mouthing."

bundle,—its style, its diction, its limitations of material, and even occasionally of literary view, its standards, all sorts of little touches like the remark about Cicero, and so forth. Yet it has, in the most important points, almost more difference from than resemblance to the views of classical critics generally. The much greater antiquity of Aristotle may be thought to make comparison with him infructuous, if not unfair. But we have seen already how far Longinus is from Dionysius, how much further from Plutarch; and we shall see in the next Book how far he is from Quintilian. Let us look where we will, to critics by profession or to critics by chance, to the Alexandrians as far as we know them, to the professional writers on Rhetoric, to Aristophanes earlier and Lucian later, always we see Longinus apart—among them by dispensation and time, but not of them by tone, by tendency, by temper.

Modernity of the treatise,

For though he himself was almost certainly unconscious of it, and might even have denied the fact with some warmth if it had been put to him, Longinus has marked out grounds of criticism very far from those of the ancient period generally, further still from those which were occupied by any critic (except Dante) of the Middle Ages and the Classical revival, and close to, if not in all cases overlapping the territory of, the modern Romantic criticism itself. As we have seen, the ancient critic was wont either to neglect the effect of a work of art altogether, and to judge it by its supposed agreement with certain antecedent requirements, or else, if effects were considered at all, to consider them from the merely practical point of view, as in the supposed persuasive effect of Rhetoric, or from the ethical, as in the purging, the elevating, and so forth, assigned to Tragedy, and to Poetry generally. Longinus has changed all this. It is the enjoyment, the transport, the carrying away of the reader or auditor, that, whether expressedly or not, is always at bottom the chief consideration with him. He has not lowered the ethical standard one jot, but he has silently refused to give it precedence of the æsthetic; he is in no way for lawlessness, but he makes it clear, again and again, that mere compliance with law, mere fulfilment of the requirements of the stop-watch and the

hundredth-of-an-inch rule, will not suffice. Aristotle had been forced, equally by his system and his sense, to admit that pleasure was an end—perhaps the end—of art; but he blenches and swerves from the consequences. Longinus faces them and follows them out.

In his attention to rhythm, especially of prose, Longinus is much less unique, for this point (as we have seen and shall see) was never neglected by the best ancient critics. But there is again something particularly distinguishing in his attempt to trace the sources of the literary pleasure in specimen passages. The ancient tendency is, though not universally, yet too generally, the other way, to select specimen passages merely as illustrations of general rules.

And this brings us to his greatest claim of all—that is to say, his attitude towards his subject as a whole. Although he nowhere says as much in so many words, no one can read his book with attention—above all, no one can read it again and again critically—without seeing that to him literature was not a schedule of forms, departments, kinds, with candidates presenting themselves for the critic to admit them to one or the other, on and during their good behaviour; but a body of matter to be examined according to its fruits, according to its provision of the literary pleasure. When it has been examined it is still for the critic to explain and justify (according to those unwritten laws which govern him) his decision that this was good, this not so good, this bad,—to point out the reasons of success and failure, to arrange the symptoms, classify the methods, and so forth. Where Longinus fell short it was almost always because ancient literature had not provided him with enough material of certain kinds, not because he ruled these kinds out *a priori*. Longinus was no Rymer. We could submit even Shakespeare to him with very little fear, and be perfectly certain that he would not, with Rapin, pronounce Dantes Aligerus wanting in fire.[1] Nay, with a sufficient body of material to set before him, we could trust him with very

or rather sempiternity.

[1] Sir Thomas Pope Blount, *Characters and Censures of the most Considerable Poets*. London, 1694. P. 58. "Rapin tells us that Dantes Aligerus wants fire, and that he has not heat enough."

much more dangerous cases than Shakespeare and Dantes Aligerus.

Yet, as we have said, he stands alone. We must skip fifteen hundred years and come to Coleridge before we meet any critic entirely of his class, yet free from some of his limitations. The hand of the author of the Περὶ Ὕψους is not subdued, but raised to what he deals in. And his work remains towering among all other work of the class, the work of a critic at once Promethean and Epimethean in his kind, learning by the mistakes of all that had gone before, and presaging, with instinctive genius, much that was not to come for centuries after.

CHAPTER VI.

BYZANTINE CRITICISM.

PHOTIUS—DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE 'BIBLIOTHECA'—IMPORTANCE OF ITS POSITION AS A BODY OF CRITICAL JUDGMENTS—TZETZES—JOHN THE SICELIOTE.

IF the word Byzantine is not quite such a byword as it once was, it still has for the most part an uncomplimentary connotation. How far that connotation is justified in reference to our special subject can hardly be better set forth than by exposition of three books of the middle and later Byzantine period.[1] The first shall be the remarkable and in a way famous *Bibliotheca*[2] of Photius in the ninth century; the second, the *Homeric Allegories* of Tzetzes in the twelfth; the third, that commentary on the περὶ ἰδέων of Hermogenes by John the Siceliote in the thirteenth, which preserves to us our earliest reference to what is almost certainly the Περὶ Ὕψους, and assigns it to Longinus.

Photius.

The first is in its way unique. The author, it may be barely necessary to say, was Patriarch of Constantinople for a period of nearly thirty years, though with an interval of ten, during which he was deposed or deprived (858-867, 877-886), in the latter half of the ninth century. He was originally a lay statesman, and, from causes no doubt political as well as religious, was much engaged in the disputes which led to the final separation between the Eastern and Western

[1] Of course many, perhaps most, of the commentators and scholiasts referred to in chaps. iv. and v. are Byzantine in date.

[2] Ed. Bekker. Berlin, 1824. 2 vols. 4to, but paged continuously.

Churches. His birth- and death-dates are not known; but he was, in the year last mentioned—886—banished by Leo VI. to a monastery in Armenia. The *Bibliothe'a* purports to be an account or review of books read during an embassy to Assyria, written for the benefit, and at the request, of the author's brother Tarasius. There is no reason for questioning the excellent Patriarch's veracity; but if he actually took with him the two hundred and eighty authors (some of them very voluminous) whom he summarises, he must have had one of the largest travelling libraries on record. The form is encyclopædic, each author having a separate article beginning Ἀνεγνώσθη, "there was read:" and to a great extent these articles consist of summaries of the matter of the books. This, as it happens, is fortunate. Photius seems to have had a special fancy for giving *précis* of narrative, whether ostensibly historical or avowedly fictitious; and he has thus preserved for us all or almost all that we know of things so interesting as the *Persica* of Ctesias, and the *Babylonica* or *Sinonis and Rhodanes* of the romancer Iamblichus. Naturally enough, a good deal of his matter is theological, and his abstracts here are seasoned with a sometimes piquant, but seldom strictly critical, animus. But he by no means confines himself to mere summary, and we have in his book what we have nowhere else—a sort of critical review of a very large portion of Greek literature. Pretty full abstract after his own manner, and some extract of this, will be the best basis possible for considering the state of literary study and taste at what was perhaps the only cultivated capital of Europe, if not (putting the dimmer East out of the question) of the world, at the time when the classical languages were almost half a millennium past their real flourishing time, and when as yet only Anglo-Saxon to certainty, and some other Teutonic dialects probably, had arisen to represent the new vernaculars in any kind of literary performance.

Photius observes no order in his notices, which would appear to be genuine notes of reading; and most of his earliest entries are short, and devoted to writers possessing at best interest of matter. The first that has struck me as possessing the interest of literature is Art. 26, on Synesius. The characterisation

Detailed examination of the Bibliotheca.

of the good Bishop of Ptolemaïs runs thus: "As for phrase, he is lofty and has ὄγκος" (the word we encounter so often and find so hard to translate), "but swerves off to the over-poetical." "His miscellaneous epistles" (the judgment just quoted is on his philosophical treatises on Providence, on Monarchy, &c.) "drip with grace and pleasure,[1] not without strength and substance[2] of thought." The rest is personal and religious, but extremely interesting.

Art. 44 deals with Philostratus and his famous life of Apollonius of Tyana. The bulk of the notice, as we should expect, both from the Patriarch's fancy for analysis of narrative and from his religious bent, is busied with the matter; but we have some actual criticism. He is as to his phrase "clear, graceful, and aphoristic, and teeming with sweetness;[3] bent on obtaining honour by archaism and the fashionableness [or new-fangledness] of his constructions."[4] Josephus has Art. 47. He is "clean in phrasing, and clever at setting forth the intention of his speech distinctly and pleasantly; persuasive and agreeable in his speeches even if occasion compels him to speak in different senses; fertile in enthymemes on either side, and with gnomæ at command if ever any man had them; also most competent to infuse passions into his discourse, and a proved hand at awaking compassion and softening the reader." All which (observe the strict rhetorical form of it) is very handsome towards that Ebrew Jew. The note (49) on Cyril of Alexandria, that he "keeps the character and idiom of the appropriate speech," that "his style is fashioned and, as it were, forced to express idiosyncratic idea,"[5] and "is like loose poetry that disdains metre," is itself thoroughly idiosyncratic, and speaks Cyril very well. Two others, 55 and 75, of a somewhat acrid character, on Johannes Philoponus ("Matæoponus rather," quoth our Patriarch), are, though acrid, by no means uncritical. All these are late and mainly ecclesiastical writers, though of a certain general literary interest. The first author, at once

[1] χάριτος καὶ ἡδονῆς ἀποστάζουσαι.

[2] πυκνότης, which some would render "shrewdness."

[3] βρύων γλυκύτητος.

[4] τῷ ἀρχαϊσμῷ καὶ ταῖς καινοπρεπεστέραις τῶν συντάξεων ἐμφιλοτιμούμενος.

[5] εἰς ἰδιάζουσαν ἰδέαν ἐκβεβιασμένος.

of considerable age and of purely literary value, to be very fully handled is the above-mentioned Ctesias, and we have only fragments whereby to control Photius's criticism of him. But the paragraph which comes at the end of the abstract of the *Persica*, and applies both to that and to the *Indica*, is itself worth abstracting. "This historian is very clear and simple in language, so that his style is mixed with much pleasure. He uses the Ionic dialect, not throughout, like Herodotus, but partially. Nor does he, like that writer, divert his story to unseasonable digressions. But from the mythical matters with which Herodotus is reproached neither does Ctesias abstain, especially in the book called *Indica*. Still, the pleasure of his history consists chiefly in the arrangement of his narrative, which is strong in the pathetic and unexpected, and in the variation of it by dint of the mythical. His style is slipshod more than is fitting, often falling into mere vulgarity. But the style of Herodotus, both in this and other respects of the power and art of the Word, is the canon of the Ionic dialect."

Appian's *Roman History* and Arrian's *Parthica* come in for successive notice, but there is nothing about the latter's literary character till the much later and fuller notice of his Alexander-book at 91, where Photius, as is specially his wont with historians, gives a full appreciation. The pupil of Epictetus, he thinks, "is second to none among those who have best drawn up histories, for he is both first-rate at succinct narration, and he never hurts the continuousness of his history by unseasonable divagations and parentheses.[1] He is original [" new-fangled," the usual translation of καινοπρεπὴς, has a too unfavourable twist in it], rather by the arrangement of his words than by his vocabulary; and he manages this in such a fashion that hardly otherwise could the tale be told more clearly and luminously. He uses a vivid, euphonious, well-turned style, and has smoothness well mixed with grandeur.[2] His neologisms are not directed to mere inno-

[1] It is odd to find the hatred of the harmless necessary parenthesis, the delight of all full minds and quick wits, and the terror of the ignorant and slow, formulated so frequently by Photius.

[2] τὸ λεῖον ἔχει τῷ μεγέθει συγκιρνάμενον.

vation *à perte de vue*,[1] but close and emphatic, so as to be real figures of speech and not merely change for ordinary words.[2] Wherefore clearness is his companion, not merely in this respect, but most of all in the arrangement and order and constitution of his style, which is the very craft-secret of clearness. For the use of merely straightforward periods is within the power of mere uncultivated persons,[3] and, if it be maintained without admixture, brings the style down to flatness and meanness, whereto Arrian, clear as he is, has not approached. And he makes use of elliptic figures not in respect of his period but of his diction, so as never to become obscure: if any one should attempt to supply what is wanting, it would seem to tend towards the superfluous, and not really to complete the ellipse. The variety of his figures is also one of his strongest points — not changing at once from simple usage, but forming themselves gently and from the beginning, so as neither to annoy with satiety nor to worry by overcrowding. In short, if any be set against him in the matter of historical composition, many even of the old classics[4] would be found his inferiors in *taxis*."

Appian has earlier had less elaborate praise, as being terse and plain in phrase, as truth-loving as possible, an expounder of strategic methods, and very good indeed at raising the depressed spirit of an army, or soothing its excitement, and exhibiting passion by means of speeches. It is odd enough, after the exaltation of Arrian—a good writer but no marvel—to the skies, to come across the following brief and grudging estimate, inserted in the shortest of summaries, of a man of the highest genius like Herodotus. Photius here, as elsewhere, does justice to the Halicarnassian as a canon of Ionic. "But he employs all manner of old wives' fables and divagations,

[1] *εἰς τὸ πόρρω.*

[2] *ἐναλλαγὴν συνήθους ὀνόματος.* This is an acute criticism, and I do not, at the time of writing, remember that it had been anticipated. Undoubtedly most practitioners of ornate and unusual style do merely "give change for ordinary words," that is to say, they think in these, and then just write something less usual in place of them.

[3] *ἰδιώταις.*

[4] *τῶν ἀρχαίων.*

whereby an intellectual sweetness runs through him,[1] though these things sometimes obscure the comprehension of the history and efface its proper and corresponding type, since truth will not have her clearness clouded by myths, nor admit divagations (*parecbaseis*) further than is fitting." This is rather dispiriting for the first really great writer whom we meet; and the long judgment upon Æschines, which follows shortly, makes little amends, because the orators had been criticised and characterised *ad nauseam* for a thousand years. Later we have no ill criticism of Dion Cassius — indeed Photius seems more at ease with post-Christian writers, even if they be non-Christians, than with the classics proper, or ἀρχαῖοι as he calls them. The careful and somewhat artificial style of this historian, his imitation of Thucydides, and some other things, are well but briefly noted.

It is evident that the good Patriarch was no sparing or infrequent novel-reader, for, as has been said, he is copious both on some novels that we have and on one that we have not. The somewhat monotonous form, however, of the Lower Greek Romance gives him more room for analysis of story than for criticism of art. He justly extols the propriety of Heliodorus, is properly shocked by the looseness of Achilles Tatius, and puts the lost Iamblichus between them in this respect. His criticism of the *Æthiopica* — of many million novel reviews the interesting first — may be given, apart, of course, from the argument of the book, which, as is usual with him, and not uncommon with his followers to-day, forms the bulk of the article.

"The book (*syntagma*) is of the dramatic kind [this is noteworthy], and it uses a style suitable to the plan, for it abounds in simplicity and sweetness, and in pathetic situations actual or expected. The narrative is diversified and unexpected, and

[1] δι' ὧν αὐτῷ ἡ κατὰ διάνοιαν γλυκύτης διαῤῥεῖ. The translation in the text, which may be varied as "which gives him [or "is the source of"] his pervading intellectual charm," and which Professor Butcher approves, seems to suit the immediate context best. But διαῤῥέω very frequently means "run *off*" or "*away*," and the general attitude of disapproval which Photius assumes towards the Herodotean fabling might seem to warrant "whereby his attraction for the intellect disappears."

has strange chance salvations[1] and bright and pure diction. If, as is reasonable, it sometimes indulges in tropes, they, too, are brilliant, and exhibit the matter in hand. The periods are symmetrical and, on the whole, arranged with a view to succinctness. The plot and the rest are correspondent to the style. His yarn[2] is of the love of a man and a woman, and he shows an anxious and careful observance of propriety of sentiment."

In Art. 77, on the not very interesting subject of Eunapius, we have the familiar phrase "New Edition" in its literal Greek form.[3] A fresh example of the interest he takes in history appears under the head of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and in Art. 90 Libanius supplies him with occasion for criticising a rhetorician pure and simple. He is, he thinks, exhibited to the best advantage[4] in his "plasmatic" [speeches written on imaginary topics] and gymnastic discourses rather than in his others, for by his excessive elaboration and busybodyness[5] in these others he has hurt the grace and charm of the,[6] as one may say, naïf and impromptu style, and deprived it of verisimilitude, causing frequent obscurity by insertions, and sometimes even by abstraction of the necessary. "But in other respects he is a canon and standard of Attic speech."

Lucian and the mysterious Lucius of Patræ seem to have occupied him together, and he discusses the authorship of the *Ass* with some acumen, recognising in Lucian a merely satiric intention, in Lucius a serious belief in magic and marvels. As for Lucian himself (respecting whom he has preserved for us the great epigram quoted above), he acknowledges the universality of the Samosatan's satire of all things Greek, their god-making and their *Aselgeia*, the extravagances of their poets and their political mistakes, the emptiness and pretentiousness of their philosophy. In fact, says Photius, in an approach at least to the true Higher Criticism, "his whole pains are spent on producing a prose Comedy of Greek things. He himself seems to

[1] *σωτηρίαις*, a capital phrase for the "rescue or two [and twenty]," the "hairbreadth 'scapes" of the Romance.

[2] This is irresistible for *ὑφαίνει*.

[3] *νέα ἐκδόσις*.

[4] *αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ χρησιμώτερός ἐστιν*.

[5] *περιεργία*.

[6] *τὴν ἔμφυτον τοῦ λόγου καὶ αὐτὸ σχεδιον (ὡς ἄν τις εἴποι.)*

be one of those who worship nothing seriously; he scoffs and mocks at other's doxies, but lays down no creed of his own, unless one should say that it is a creed to be creedless. In style he is of the very best, brilliant and classical, and signally distinguished in diction, and of all others a lover of good order and purity, with a clear and symmetrical magnificence. His composition is arranged so that the reader seems not to be reading prose, and as though a very pleasant song, without distinct musical accompaniment, were dropping into the ears of the hearers. And altogether, as we said, his style is of the very best, and ill-matched with the subjects at which he chose to laugh."

Photius is not lavish of the word *aristos*, and it is only fair to say that, for its day and way, this criticism is not far itself from deserving the epithet.

After some shorter notices, including a good many of Lexicons (Photius himself, it need hardly be said, was a lexicographer), we come, at Art. 159, to Isocrates, on whom the Byzantine judgment is again noteworthy. He has more, Photius thinks, of the sophist than, like the other Nine, of the actual advocate. "His readers can see at once that he employs a distinct and pure style, and shows a great deal of care about the craftsmanship of his speeches, so that his order and his care overreach themselves a little and become excessive. In fact, this excess of apparatus does not so much provide genuine arguments as tasteless ineptitude."[1]

"Again, he is wanting in ethical character and truth and nervousness of style (*γοργότης*.) Of sublimity, so far as it suits political discourses, he mixes a very good dose, and suitably to his clearness. But his style is more languid[2] than it ought to be. And he is not least blamed for attention to trifles, and a balancing of clauses[3] which disgusts. But we say this in reference to the excellence of his speeches, pointing out what fails,

[1] *τὸ ἀπειρόκαλον*, one of the most damaging of Greek critical terms.

[2] *ἄτονος*.

[3] *σμικρολογία καὶ τὸ προσκορὲς τῶν παρ σώσεων*. It is needless to say that this *προσκορὲς*, this "satiated nausea" of the balanced antithetic sentence, has recurred as regularly as the resort to the most obvious, and, so long as it is fresh, most effective, of rhetorical devices.

and is exceptional in them, inasmuch as in comparison with some of those who have made bold to write speeches, even his shortcomings would appear to be excellence."

Immediately before this article on Isocrates there is a very shrewd note (and one which is "for thoughts" to any one who has ever written books) on the *Sophistike Paraskeue* of Phrynichus. "This writer, if any ever was, is fullest of various knowledge, but otherwise redundant and garrulous: *for when it was open to him to have got the matter completely finished off, without missing a single important point, in not a fifth part of his actual length, he, by saying things out of season, has stretched it out to an unmanageable bulk; and while he has collected for others' use the matter of a good and suitable treatise, he cannot be said to have made much use of it himself.*"

It would be possible to extend these excerpts and abstracts very considerably from my notes of reading the great mass of the *Bibliotheca;* though the larger part of that mass is itself made up, not of literary criticisms at all, but, as has been said, of summaries, abstracts, and extracts. In not a few cases the longest articles deal with commentaries or anthologies, the Platonic studies of the rhetorician Aristides, the *meletæ* or declamations of Himerius, the *Bibliotheca* of Diodorus, the fortunately still extant Commonplace-books of Stobæus, and the like. But the foregoing pages have probably given sufficient foundation for a study of the Photian position, which may be taken, without rashness, as a very favourable representative of Byzantine criticism generally.[1]

Importance of its position as a body of critical judgment.

In making this estimate we must first of all take note of certain limitations, which may be accidental but which also may not. It is at least curious that he never deals directly with a poet. Even his indirect references, borrowed from his authors, to the greater Greek verse-writers are few, and, speaking with the reserves due in the case of so voluminous and peculiar a

[1] And it cannot be too often repeated that when Byzantine men of letters were not criticising they were often doing something better *for us.* He would be a sorry critic himself who would not give a wilderness of all but the very greatest members of his own class for John Stobæus or Constantine Cephalas.

compilation as the *Bibliotheca*, I do not remember any independent poetical criticism of his. On the other hand, such criticisms as those which have been quoted above on Lucian, on Isocrates, on Phrynichus, and others, show, in the first place, no contemptible critical acumen, and in the second place, a critical attitude which is worthy of a good deal of attention. For the literary characteristics of his authors Photius distinctly "has a good eye": he can see a church by daylight and a little more also. We may even say that he shows a good deal more detachment, more faculty of seeing his man in the round, than any purely classical critic displays. Here and there, as in his eulogy of Arrian, he is a little too technically rhetorical, and has evidently not got rid of the notion of the Figures as things possessing a real existence. And there is more than a trace in him of the growth of that critical jargon which has been noticed above, certain phrases recurring rather too often, like "gusto" with old-fashioned critics, and divers terms, which it is not necessary to mention, with new-fangled ones. But technicalities are, at their worst, an evidence that the *techne* exists. Further, it would be, as has been seen, extremely unjust to regard Photius as a mere phrase-monger. His criticism of Lucian is as comprehensive as it is shrewd, it is "criticism of life" as well as criticism of literature; that of Isocrates shows that he was not to be caught by mere scholastic elegance; that of Phrynichus, that he had an eye for method; his notices of the Romancers, that he could appreciate and relish kinds out of the beaten track of classical literary classification and practice; the remark on "merely straightforward periods" is a just and shrewd one. Not only would Photius have made an exceedingly good reviewer, but we may say that he is almost the patriarch of reviewers in two senses, that he is the first of all such as have dealt practically with literature from the reviewer's point of view.

To say this is of course not to give unmitigated and indisputable praise. There is no lack of advocates of the devil who will say that the reviewer's point of view is not easily found in a very original age, or by a very original genius. It may be so —the age of Photius himself was certainly not a very original

age, except in countries where the point of view of the reviewer was as certainly quite unknown. But this is not the question for us; the question for us is, Have we met this attitude? Have we come upon any one occupying this point of view before? And the answer must, I think, be, "No; we have not." Dionysius, of all our writers, comes nearest to it, for Quintilian is too summary, and Longinus is considering rather a single quality of literature, as shown in divers authors, than divers authors by themselves, and as presenting a combination of qualities in each case. What we would give almost anything for is a collection of such reviews by Aristotle; and we have not got them. We do not know that Aristotle ever thought of such a thing,[1] though he might well have made it as a preparation for the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, just as he made his collection of "polities" as a preparation for the *Politics*.

The absence of poetical criticism from Photius is specially to be regretted, because it leaves us in doubt as to his power of *recognising and analysing, not merely the finer subtleties of* form, but the more complex and interesting kinds of literary matter. His own interests, it is pretty clear, were, though he had the liking for novels which is often found in men of science and business, chiefly scientific, historical, and philosophical, including, of course, religion in philosophy. There is probably no Greek writer, whose subject in any way admitted of it, who has said so little about Homer. In dealing with Stobæus he has the patience (though, as has been seen, he is far from being a mere enumerator) to enumerate all the heads of the *Florilegium* and the *Eclogæ*, and all the authors, hundreds of them as there are, whom the anthologist has laid under contribution. But he is tempted into no critical asides about them. He is essentially positive—frankly busied with matter, or with the more material side of form.

Yet to the historian of criticism he has a singular interest, because of that position of origin which has been noted. Cicero and Pliny in their libraries were in a position to do much the same thing; had, as we shall see, a kind of dim

[1] Unless, which one would rather not think, he meant the *Problems* (*v. supra* p. 49 *sq.*) as such.

velleity of doing it now and then, but did it not. Athenæus, if he had cared less for cooks and courtesans more for literature; Aulus Gellius and Macrobius, if mere philology on the one hand, and mere folk-lore and mythology on the other, had not drawn them aside, would probably have anticipated him. But no one actually has; none has applied to the library or its prose division the process which goes to the making of a *catalogue raisonné* in painting. No doubt Photius leaves a good deal to be done, independently of his silence on poetry and drama. His comparison is so limited as to be almost non-existent; it is much if he can compare Heliodorus, Iamblichus, and Achilles Tatius in reference to the treatment of matters erotic; Ctesias and Herodotus, on the score of resisting, or succumbing to, story-telling digression. But even in this there is the germ, the rudiment, of the great Comparative Method. So again the other great Lamp of Criticism, the historical estimate, still has its shutter drawn for him. A vague distinction between the ἀρχαῖοι and the moderns is indeed not uncommon; but we have, so far as I have noticed, no distinct line drawn between the two, and both are huddled and jumbled together. Photius has not yet risen to that highest conception of criticism which involves the "grasping" of each author in his complete self, and the placing of him in the general literary map or genealogy (whichever phase may be preferred) of the world. And lastly, the silly old etiquette of silence about Latin still seems to weigh, if unconsciously, on him. He does indeed allude to the birth-year of Virgil. In his notices of historians of Rome he necessarily has to mention some Roman matters, and he mentions that Cicero was slain while reading the *Medea*. But my memory, assisted by Bekker's excellent index, traces no critical remark, comparative or independent, about any great Latin writer, and nothing more than the barest mention of one or two by name. Yet, with all these drawbacks, the niche we have indicated is securely his, though he has scarcely yet been established in it.[1]

[1] There is in Photius a later notice of Isocrates, in connection with others of the usual set of Attic orators; and these are chiefly interesting for some references to the literary historian Cæcilius, referred to by Longinus, and to Lon

If an example be required between Photius and John, it may be found (of no encouraging character) in the almost contemptible *Homeric Allegories* of Tzetzes[1] written in that dreary "political" verse, the only consolation of which is the remembrance that, whether as origin or echo, it has sometimes been connected with the charming *Meum est propositum* metre of the Latin Middle Ages. In Tzetzes, the allegorical method neither reaches its pinnacle of fantasticality as in the *Romance of the Rose*,—there is often something faintly fascinating there,—nor attains to the rather imposing mazes and meanderings of fifteenth-century personification, but stumbles along in pedestrian gropings of this kind[2] (on *Il.* i. 517 *sq.*): "The groaning of Zeus signifieth a puff of wind moving the eyebrows of him, and conducting the thickness of clouds. The downcoming of Thetis indicates that there was rain, which is also a kind of consentment of assistance. And the coming of Zeus to his own home is the restoration of the atmosphere to its former condition, having thinned out the thickness of the cloud to rain. The rising up of the gods from their seats is the confusion and disturbance of the elements," &c., &c. The much-ridiculed allegorical morals of the *Gesta Romanorum* are sense, poetry, piety, to this ineffably dull and childish attempt to substitute a cheap pseudo-scientific Euhemerism for the criticism of literature. If Allegory had not too profitably assisted at the cradle of Greek literature, she certainly infested its death-bed in her most decrepit and malignant aspect.

Tzetzes.

At the same time, we must not be too contemptuous of Byzantine criticism. Had the vast mass of the later rhetorical scholiasts yielded nothing to the sifting but the quotation in John the Siceliote (though as from the *Philological Homilies*, not the Περὶ Ὕψους), by name, of the Longinian censure on the *Orithyia*, it would almost be justified in existing, not to mention references in others, one of which

John the Siceliote.

ginus himself as "the critic who flourished under Claudius" (predecessor of Aurelian), "and took great share in the struggle of Zenobia, queen of the Osrhoeni." But the criticism on Demosthenes referred to can hardly be that of the Περὶ Ὕψους.

[1] Ed. Boissonade, Paris, 1851.

[2] Ed. cit., p. 81, l. 299 *sq.*

shows us that in the same collection Longinus gave a discussion (the tendency of which we can e sily guess) on the *stomphodes* or "mouthy."[1] But the siftings are not quite limited to these two.

John, who appears possibly, if not at all certainly, to have had the surname of Doxopater, and to have been sometimes designated by it, appears also to have been a monk. He must (on his own authority) have observed the virtue of Poverty much better than some of his fellows, and few of them can have more avoided the vice of laziness. His voluminous works devoted to Rhetoric are ranged by Walz[2] under eleven titles: to wit, Prolegomena and Homilies on the Progymnasmata of Aphthonius, General Prolegomena to Rhetoric, Commentaries on the States, Inventions and Ideas of Hermogenes, Epideictic speeches on the Horse and against the Saracens, a destructive discussion of the myth of Prometheus, a "Basileios" and a "Politikon." These works contain some personal details and complaints, which, if he subsequently became Patriarch of Constantinople, were heard by Fortune in her less savage mood; and he seems to have busied himself with theology and history, as well as rhetoric. But it is very difficult to place either his patriarchate, or consequently his life, chronologically. He might have been the John Glycas who held the dignity from 1316 to 1320, when he abdicated; but Glycas seems to have been married. So perhaps he was John Camater, an earlier occupant (under the Latin Empire) of the see in 1204.

All this, it will be seen, is a rather unsubstantial pageant; but John's works are solid enough. Even the *Prolegomena* (taking them as his) of Doxopater, and the *Commentaries on the Ideas* (to which alone we have access), fill five hundred pages. It is in the latter that we are to look for anything touching our subject. They are rather wide-ranging, to which character of theirs we doubtless owe the Longinian citation.

Neither did John always observe that scrupulous accuracy which is so dear to the heart of a certain class of critic, that, like a true altruist, he would have every one, except himself, possess

[1] *V. supra*, p. 171 *note*. [2] Vol. vi. p. 5 *sq*.

it. At the opening he writes "Themistocles" for "Miltiades." But his erudition is considerable, and his qualities in other respects not contemptible. It is, however, very noticeable that he is as much inclined to the general and disinclined from the particular as if he had lived fifteen hundred years earlier. Although he is no slavish Platonist (he has somewhere the happy phrase Πλάτων Πλάτωνος ἀναξίως. "Did Plato? the less Plato he"), he is fully Platonic in his scorn of the μερικαὶ ἰδέαι, of the mere "characterising" speeches, Lysiac and Isocratean, and so forth, and aims at the "circumprehensive and comprehensive" idea and phrase which transcends all these. Thus we are once more face to face with that putting of the cart before the horse which has met us so often—with that discussion of δεινότης and γλυκύτης which is no doubt a capital thing in its way, but which ought to be preluded and, as military men say, "prepared" by a long, by an almost infinite, examination of the individual exponents and practitioners of the Vigorous and the Sweet.

It is, of course, fair to remember that he is annotating Hermogenes, and that he can hardly be expected to follow methods different from those of his text. But it necessarily follows that his loyalty leads him away from the fields most likely to be fertile for us, and, when he does approach them, directs him mainly to the Orators, and to them chiefly, if not wholly, from the strictly rhetorical point of view. Yet he is by no means ill to read, though a little technical and abstract, on rhythm (opening of Bk. i. chap. i.); and if he has gone no further in reference to φαντασία than all before him except Philostratus, that is no great reproach to him. Undoubtedly, however, his chief—as at the same time his most tantalising—attraction is his reference to things which, in his comparatively modern period, must have still existed, but which seem now to be irrecoverably lost. Such is his quotation, p. 93, of certain remarks of Longinus on the poet Menelaus.[1] We may doubt whether definite poetical criticism from the excellent John would have been satisfactory, when we find him assigning

[1] Apparently this poet, "by taking pains, changed an unhappily gifted nature into exactness and blamelessness."

"out-and-out"[1] poetical quality to the soft inanity of Isocrates, and the want of it to the rough fire of Thucydides. Yet in the lower and "composition-book" kind of criticism he is not to seek—the synopsis of clearness at p. 173 being a very workmanlike composition.[2]

And so, without further minute examination of this curiosity, we may take some general view of it as the last words—or fairly representative of the last words—of Greek rhetorical criticism, unaffected by mediæval literature, unaffected even by Latin, to any considerable, or at least avowed, extent, but turning round and round the long-guarded treasures of its own special hoard, like the dragons of fable. To us, perhaps, the hoard does not seem very inviting. The enormous apparatus of distinction and terminology is set to work, almost exclusively, on matter which has neither the attraction of the highest æsthetic problems, nor the practical interest and profit of direct literary criticism of particulars. There is abundance of learning, and by no means a dearth of mother-wit. But the worst side of Scholasticism—the side which was long unjustly taken for the whole, but which *is* a side thereof—makes itself almost universally felt Sometimes one almost thinks of one of the keenest, if not the most generally delectable, strokes of Rabelaisian satire, the duel of signs between Panurge and Thaumast. This *-tes* and that *-ia* hurtle through the air almost without conveying understanding, though they may darken a good deal. With sufficient pains and goodwill, you may disinter many a shrewd remark, many a really useful definition, many a scrap of precious information, by no means unintelligently used. But on the whole, the impression is as of the ghost of Rhetoric struggling against being re-embodied as the soul of Criticism.

[1] *ἀντικρυς.*

[2] Besides citing the *Orithyia* passage John also refers to Longinus as admiring Moses (Walz, vi. 211), which, of course, strengthens the supposition that he had the Περὶ Ὕψους before him not a little (*v. supra*, pp. 156, 162).

INTERCHAPTER I.

We have endeavoured, in the foregoing Book, to survey—from the actual texts, and admitting no conjectural or theoretical reconstruction—the history of literary criticism in Greece and the Greek Empire till its fall. It is our duty in this first halt to survey this survey—to see what results it actually gives us, to classify and arrange them, to account for them as philosophically as possible, and, without digressing into the quicksands of theory, to lay down the solid road of logical and historical perspective.

We have seen that criticism in Greece began from two different sources, neither of which, perhaps, was, or could have been expected to be, likely to supply it in an absolutely unmixed condition. There was, in the first place, the strong Greek philosophising tendency, working upon the earliest documents (the most important, then as now, identified with the name of Homer), and subjecting them to processes which oftenest took the form of a kind of rationalising allegory. The second was the invention, for more or less practical purposes, of the art of Rhetoric or Persuasive Composition. As, in the first place, the collection of written literature was very small, and as the oratorical character impressed itself more or less strongly upon nearly *all* literature in the process of publication, this dominance of Oratory was long maintained, and continued, almost to the latest times, to prevent Rhetoric from assuming its proper etymological position as "speech-craft" in the widest sense, as the art of artificially arranged language.

But this inconvenience, always more or less existing, was mitigated by practice in divers ways. As actual literature,

both prose and verse, mustered and multiplied, and as it was more and more enjoyed by the keen Greek appetite for pleasures of all kinds, it at the same time presented more and more temptation to the equally keen Greek aptitude for philosophical inquiry. Larger and larger treasuries were made available for quotation and imitation; more and more kinds of literature were presented to the student for investigation, classification, inquiry into sources, methods, effects. And so after a century, or a century and a half, of progress and exercise, of which little remains to us except the brilliant, but from this point of view wayward, work of Plato, we are confronted, in the work of Aristotle, with an Art of Poetry, incomplete in certain ways, but singularly mature in its own way, with an Art of Prose which, though it has not yet by any means recognised its real nature and estate, and persists in regarding itself as an Art of Persuasion merely, has yet accumulated many valuable observations, and has made the paths of future investigators fairly straight and smooth.

While, however, the oratorical preoccupation prevented Rhetoric from attaining the development which might otherwise have been expected, both Rhetoric and Poetics were very seriously obstructed by the unequal growth of literary kinds within Greek itself, and by the absence of any other literature with which to compare such kinds as existed, and by which to discern the absence of those that did not exist. The whole of Greek Poetic was prejudicially affected—and the affection has continued to be a source of evil in all criticism since—by the accidental lateness of prose fiction in Greek literature; just as the whole of Greek Rhetoric was prejudicially affected by the accidental predominance of Greek oratory. The habit—in the main a sound one—of generalising from the actual facts, led to very arbitrary theories of more literary kinds than one. It was assumed that what we may call "periodic" Epic was the only kind; and Romance, which may be very fairly called a "loose" Epic, was barred as improper. Still more was the same distinction ignored in drama; where a single, though in its way very perfect, form of Tragedy was arbitrarily assumed to be the only one possible or permissible. So the accidental and easily

separable extravagances and licences of the Ancient Comedy were allowed to obscure its merits, and depress its rank, in the eyes of the critic Lyric — perhaps the very highest of all literary kinds, as it must be the oldest, and is the most perennial—became a mere appendage to tragedy. The great kind of History, in which Greece had already produced such magnificent examples, was in the same way regarded as a sort of baggage-waggon to oratorical Rhetoric; and the dialogic form which was preferred in philosophy, partly owing to the habits of the nation, and partly owing to the towering eminence of Plato, was in the same way, or much the same way, allowed or forced to attach itself to the same train.

But these mischiefs, though sufficiently considerable, and assisted by the ignorance (changed latterly in the worse days to a contemptuous ignoring) of other languages, were by no means the equals of those caused directly by this ignorance, while they were aggravated by it in every way. If, while we are certainly not superior to the ancients in most branches of literature, where comparison is possible, we may challenge them more safely in criticism, it is due almost, if not quite wholly, to what has been called the illegitimate advantage of our possession of an infinitely larger stock of accumulated literature, and of the fact that this literature is distributed over the most various times, nations, and languages. It is the rarest thing at any time to find a critic of the first class who is not acquainted with literatures besides his own; and it is almost invariable to find that the mistakes which great critics make arise out of ignorance or forgetfulness of other literatures besides their own. But even in antiquity there is no critic of, or approaching, this first class, except Aristotle, who suffered the full exposure to this disability. As a "tongue of comparison" Longinus knew Latin: Dionysius and Quintilian, who, if not critics of the first class, are not far off it, knew, the one Latin, the other Greek. But Aristotle (unless the legends about Alexander having sent him Indian communications have any basis, and unless we take the references of Plato and others to Egyptian stories as having much more solid ground than there is any reason to accord them) had none, and could

have had none: while, even if he had been stocked with Egyptian and Sanscrit, these would have done him but little good, though they might have corrected his delusions as to the necessary connection of poetry and fiction. It must always be reckoned as one of the most fatal proofs of the literary inferiority of the Roman genius that the younger literature, though it enjoyed the bilingual advantage to the full, made so little advance on the older in criticism.

For the three centuries between Aristotle and Dionysius we are but ill provided with original texts. But both from what we have, and from such notices as are trustworthy, we can be tolerably sure that attention was almost entirely devoted, on the one side to the verbal or material criticism of the Alexandrian and Pergamene schools, on the other to technical Rhetoric. Now the former, though a most necessary ancilla to literary appreciation proper, is always to be kept in proper subordination to her mistress; and the conditions of the latter, though in one sense favourable to criticism (inasmuch as the stock of actual literature was always increasing, and the temptation to turn to it from mere declamation-making might at least be expected to be always stronger), was in itself becoming more and more a futile technique. Symbouleutic oratory (above vestry rank) was killed and kept dead by the petty tyrants, the less successors of Alexander, and lastly the Roman rule. Judicial Rhetoric tended to confine itself to minor causes. Only Epideictic, the most dangerous of the kinds, began to flourish more and more, and resulted by degrees, as we have seen, in the creation of a singular profession or pseudo-profession, the members of which had about them something of the travelling lecturer, something of the popular preacher, something—nay, a good deal—of the hack book-maker, and not a little of the journalist pure and simple. Their own study of literature, unless they kept to the stock passages of the text-books, must have been fairly thorough; but literature was to them partly what Burton's *Anatomy* was to Captain Shandon, a mere dictionary of quotations, partly a collection of patterns. Very rarely did they take it by itself even for the canvas of one of their show-orations, and when they did it was seldom or

never from the point of view of appreciation of strictly literary beauty.

For about half a century before and a century after the Christian era the record, even putting Latin criticism aside altogether, is a more distinct one. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, and Dion Chrysostom, give us a good deal more material than we have yet had. But the results of the inspection of it are not wholly satisfactory. Dionysius of Halicarnassus is, as has been said, perhaps our typical specimen of the literary critic of antiquity. He has far less force and method and originality than Aristotle; but then he is a student confining himself to Rhetoric and History, not a world-philosopher, taking up the philosophy of literature merely as part of a whole. He has far less genius than Longinus; but he is also far more copiously preserved. We read him with respect; we meet just and acute observations in him; we can even occasionally compliment him on something like (never quite) the "grasp" of the comic fragment. But he is still partly under the limitations of his technical rhetoric, partly under others less easy to describe exactly; and he neglects Latin literature, by his time a very considerable entity He cannot wholly bring himself to regard literature as literature. With Plutarch the case is much worse, for it is evident that he will not do this at all. It is an educating and ethical influence; a convenient storehouse of fact and example; a respectable profession; but not a great, a sovereign, and an infinitely delightful art. As for Dion (the most literary of the pure rhetoricians, and a favourable example of them), he is only an entertainer, the showman of another art, which is not quite coarse, but is certainly not in the highest sense fine. Lucian, somewhat later, is a true artist, a true man of letters, and occasionally a critic, endowed with unerring eyes and the very Sword of Sharpness itself but he is this only at times, and even at those times he is too negative.

If we advance a little in point of time and turn our attention to the strict teaching and practice of Rhetoric itself, from the second century onward, and probably backward almost to the very time of Aristotle, the spectacle is even less satisfactory,

The work, of which Hermogenes and Aphthonius are the coryphæi, leading an innumerable chorus of followers and commentators, who continue for more than a thousand years, is not exactly contemptible work. Work conducted with extreme diligence and also, at any rate in some cases, with remarkable alertness and acuteness of mind, can never be wholly contemptible. But it is work disappointing, unsatisfying, and even irritating to the last degree. The technical Rhetoric, always arbitrarily limited in subject and perversely conventional in method, has practically lost all chance of exercising itself in the noblest of its three divisions. Deliberative oratory is dead, except in exercises and make-believes, and the bread-winning chicanery of forensic, the frivolities (hollow except as also bread-winning) of epideictic, have usurped the whole room. It might be thought that in this bereaved condition the art would bethink itself of that profitable, dignified and delightful application which it had always more or less directly practised, but which had seemed less dignified than Persuasion — the art of literary criticism proper. But it does nothing—or but little—of the kind. The remarks of Hermogenes on Frigidity are not bad; the doubtful Demetrius, in his study of Interpretation, is not far from the true kingdom others approach it here and there. The invention of that critical "lingo," to which reference has more than once been made, is something, though a something liable to abuse, and capable of standing in the way of better things. But, on the whole, the endless procession of some fifty generations, from the author of the *Rhet. ad Alex.* to John of Sicily, busies itself either on the one hand with endless distinctions, systematisations, and terminologies, with everlastingly twining strands of new colour into the rope that lets down the bucket into the empty well, and varying the staves and hoops of the bucket itself; or on the other with the provision of cut-and-dried patterns for the use of the brainless, with telling tongue-tied sophists what they are to say at the funeral of a fifth cousin, and how to make the most of a harbour which is dry for three-quarters of every tide.

Amidst all this desert and chaos of wasted industry there stands the great rock of the Περὶ Ὕψους, with its shade and refreshment in the weary land of its own contemporaries, and with its brow catching the dawn which was not to shine fully for more than fifteen hundred years, and is hardly noonday yet. In the section devoted to it we have examined, as thoroughly as our limits permitted, the special merits and defects of this great little book; it is only necessary here to lay a slight additional stress on the fact that if it be not the sole book of antiquity — the sole book, except Dante's, of antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the earlier modern times—to set forth that critical ideal which comprehends the formal and the material, the verbal and the ideal merits of literature, it exhibits this comprehension as no other book does. To confine ourselves to our present special subject—the criticism of Greek antiquity—Plato may alternate noble flights with curious crotchets about literature; Aristophanes may criticise from the point of view of robust common-sense which is yet not in the least Philistine; Aristotle may have almost a mathematical grasp of his own notions of form, and a generous enthusiasm for certain kinds of dignity in subject and proportion; Dionysius may show that adherence to technique (and a rather vicious technique too) is quite compatible with genuine literary appreciation. But all these, and much more others, have their eyes mainly off the object. Aristotle himself at times, lesser men like Plutarch, who have misread their Plato, continually, seem to think it rather vain to look at that object at all. The intelligent enjoyment of literature; the intimacy with it, at once voluptuous and intellectual; the untiring, though it may be never fully satisfied, quest after the secret of its charms, never neglecting the opportunity of basking and revelling in them —these things, till we come to Longinus, are rare indeed. And when we do meet them, the rencontre is of a sort of accidental and shamefaced character. When we come to Longinus there is no more false modesty. "Beautiful words are the light of thought." These words themselves are the lantern of criticism.

Elsewhere it gleams more faintly; though it would be as ungrateful as it would be Philistine to ignore the debt which we owe to others, from Aristotle himself downwards. It is characteristic of Greek criticism—and it is the secret of its weakness as well as of its strength—that it is more busy with kinds than with authors, with authors than with books. And when it is busy with authors at all, it is hardly ever busy with them as wholes, as phenomena occupying an individual place in the literary cosmos: but almost always as examples of this or that quality, as supplying illustrations of this or that Figure, as giving a good pattern for such-and-such a progymnasma, a model for dealing with such-and-such a stasis. Proceeding in this way, criticism attempts—and fails—to be scientific, it renounces its right to be artistic, and effects the renunciation. The individual *ethos* of the poet, the more solid but not less individual *ethos* of the proseman, flies off and melts away, when each is merely regarded as an example of "*todetes*" or "*tallotes*," as a lecturer's cabinet, in which you put your hand to draw out an illustration of Anadiplosis or Palillogia. Almost may the most idealist of metaphysical students think of turning to sheer Hobbism, of blaspheming "*nesses* and *tudes* and *ties*," when he sees them dragged in and abused after this fatal fashion, which even Aristotle does not wholly escape, and in which others indulge as if it were their sole and legitimate business.

It follows that, except for the stock contrast of Herodotus and Thucydides, in respect of the Orators (the exception being there due to an obvious reason), and to a less extent of the Three Tragedians, we have very few studies at once comprehensive and comparative of authors in Greek, and that, out of Longinus, such studies as we have are scrappy, technical, and altogether lacking in that critical *συνάρπασμα* which the great *locus* of Simylus requires. There is really no second passage in Greek which can be put alongside of the Longinian estimate of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, agree or disagree as we may with the details of this.

Another and very important matter (which it is fairer and more philosophical to call rather a defect of our under-

standing than a defect of the matter presented to it) lies in that impossibility of attaining the Greek standpoint as to certain rhythmical and verbal matters, which has been more than once glanced at, and which is instanced in the case of Longinus himself. Few among the wiser even of those who have paid special attention to the subjects of Greek music and Greek pronunciation would, I think, assert, that they thoroughly understand the passages relating to prose rhythm, and the special suitableness of the cretic and some of the pæons as the base-feet for it. And it is practically admitted by most sober and well-instructed critics that both Aristotle and Longinus make strictures upon things as "frigid" and in bad taste, that they ostracise metaphors and ban conceits which to any modern criticism (putting aside mere assentation) seem perfectly harmless, if not positively admirable. The same thing occurs in English and French to this day, although in this case all the difficulties which beset us in relation to Greek disappear, except the radical difference of national (not now even of temporal) ear and brain. A phrase of Bossuet, which seems to French ears even of to-day the *ne plus ultra* of majestic melody, will strike very well-instructed Englishmen as a rhetorical jingle. and French critics of enthusiasm and enlightenment will see no difference between the music of Moore and that of Shelley, or rather prefer the former. In the other sphere, what is to an Englishman a piece of dry humour will appear to a Frenchman a *saugrenu* monstrosity; and a Frenchman's ideal of manly eloquence, dignified or passionate as the case may be, will seem to an Englishman to show nothing but the maudlin pathos of a drunkard, or the petulant braggadocio of a child. Yet here there are innumerable side-lights, a long course of partially identical history, literature, and religion, the experience of persons of both nations who have lived in and with the other, to guide us. No wonder that, when we have none of these things, we should be puzzled. Yet the quarrel, such as it is, with the Greek critics, is not so much that their estimates, low or high, differ from ours, as that they have given us so few documents from their own side to help setting contrast. Even one essay, on both the literatures, by a Greek to set over

against the invaluable survey by Quintilian would be not merely something for which we could gladly exchange most of the Greek writers on Rhetoric, except Aristotle, but something in consideration of which we would gladly read all these writers, and make no complain' of them. As it is, we have to go to Photius, a representative of a time and thought far more alien from those of the Greeks proper than is Quintilian himself, for full review of even Greek writers, and he also is silent about Latin.

But "something sealed the mouths of these Evangelists." It is perhaps not unphilosophical to think that this silence was the price the world had to pay for the confident and magnificent advance which it made under the guidance of the Greek genius. If that genius had been less confident, if it had assumed less cavalierly that no other literature could be worth taking into account, if it had hesitated and faltered about systematising boldly whatever had been produced by itself, and allowing *everything else (if anything else existed) to go κατ' οὖρον*, what we have would probably not have been vouchsafed to us. And in that case we should, as probably, never have made up the loss. The estimable but not wise persons who try to make out that the undoubtedly rich and great languages and literatures of Modern Europe can supply substitutes for those of Greece and Rome overlook, ignore, or perhaps are honestly ignorant of, the fact that the very strong points of these modern languages and literatures, their Romantic ebb and flow, their uncertainty, their complaisance to the vagaries of the individual, their lack of logical system and *ordonnance*, make it impossible that they should ever give us the principles of fixity which we find in the Classical tongues. Those of us who, far more by chance and good fortune than by any deliberate and virtuous *proairesis*, happen to be acquainted pretty equally with both Ancient and Modern Literature, know that neither will do alone, but that for the education both of the world at large and of any epoch of it, the Ancient is even more necessary than the Modern.

Some idea of the positive extent of our debts to Greek is necessary to this history, though a *résumé* of them is no easy

thing to give. In the first place has to be reckoned the laying of the foundations of mere grammar—the preliminary to every kind of *graphica lexis*. This must have been done pretty early, and there is no language in the literary record with which it could be done for the first time to so much advantage as with Greek Some languages, as Latin and its daughter French, have a sort of peddling tendency to purely arbitrary rule, and to enforced observance of it. Others, the chief example of which is English, have had too haphazard a history, and are too much of ingrained rebels to strict convention, to admit of elaborate grammar, despite the athletic attempts which are sometimes made to discover it in them. Between these two, Greek presents not so much the happy mean as the consummate union of all the best qualities. It evidently possessed, from the remotest time at which we have any traces of literature, an innate sense of proportion and grammatical symmetry to guide it, first into unconscious and then into conscious symmetry of accidence and syntax, besides a native melody at once sweet, vigorous, and disciplined, which made it the ideal raw material for prosody. On the other hand, the intense philosophical spirit of the Greeks, and their love of liberty, saved them from the hard and fast irrationality of the grammars of some languages, and from the tendency, not merely to make arbitrary rules, but to insist on their observance with absolute rigidity. The result was a grammar which to this day is the pattern grammar of the world —as flexible as it is symmetrical, as intelligently free as it is philosophically policed,—an eternal harmony of idiom and rule.

We have glanced in the above paragraph at Prosody, but something more must be said on this head, for the debt of literary criticism to Greek in this respect is almost the mightiest item of the total account. The mathematical element, which distinguishes this part of Grammar, enables a people with a suitable language, and a sufficient stock of experiments in it, to discover something much more like a universal calculus than is possible in Accidence and Syntax; and the Greeks discovered this. Prosody is a science which, in its pure, though of course not in its applied, divisions, as regards strictly metrical writing, they practically found out once for all.

There are systems of rhythm—early Latin probably, early Teutonic certainly—to which this prosody does not apply, except partially, if it applies at all. But all poetries that depend upon *metre*—that is to say, on the arrangement of equivalenced syllabic values in certain recurring orders—are governed by the laws which the Greeks discovered, and which the Greeks exemplified. On this side, therefore (and it is a most important side), the literary critic owes them everything. They have furnished him with every tool that he requires for taking to pieces the mechanism of the *Ancient Mariner*, as well as of the choruses of the *Agamemnon*, of the odes of Hugo as well as of those of Pindar, of the *Nordsee* of Heine as of the fragments of Sappho and Alcæus. And it is not at all improbable that if we possessed more of their work on prose rhythm, that subject also, and the kindred one of the so-called accentual rhythms of Latin and early Teutonic verse, would be almost as much facilitated

When we pass beyond these elements and come to the general subject of Rhetoric (which, it must be remembered, in at least some places is recognised as covering the whole of *graphica lexis*) and Poetics, the advances in both departments, but especially in the latter, are still very great, if not so great proportionately. We have only one poetical kind—that of Tragedy, as understood by the Greeks themselves, and practised by the three great tragedians—which has been subjected to a thorough critical examination in extant text. But then this examination is so thorough that, in reference to the particular kind, hardly anything has been added since. We have, in reference to the capital example of another kind, Epic (again as understood by the Greeks), a large variety of treatments, from Aristotle to Longinus, which, if they do not give as firm and systematic a theory of this as of the former, yet go far towards doing so. Of the remaining divisions of poetry we learn, it must be confessed, less from the Greeks; and even in examples we are, except in so far as the Ode and the Idyl are concerned, very lamentably ill supplied. But in the one case, as in the other, the fragments are precious. And it may in such a book as the present, be pardonable once more to point to the feather in the

cap of Criticism furnished by the fact that, but for two critics, we should be destitute of these two great lyrics of Sappho which, outside the contents of drama, are the crown and flower of Greek lyrical poetry.

In prose the same complete examination was only given, and, in the special conditions so often referred to, could only have been given, to one, and that the least important of all the divisions of prose literature—to Oratory Oratory is, after all, the prose literature of the savage. It is in no degree a contradiction to this that it should have reached its highest pitches at periods which were not at all savage—in the palmy days of Athens, in the agony of the Republic at Rome, in the England of the eighteenth century—for it is scarcely necessary to take into account the one period of modern times when savagery ruled once more supreme, the French Revolution, though Oratory certainly did then share the shameful throne. This confirms the doctrine just laid down *simpliciter*, the others confirm it in directly. In the great age of Greece savagery was passing; but the efforts of civilisation were directed to making perfect what the savage ages had regarded as most important. The whole condition of Roman life tended to support oratory. And in eighteenth-century England it so happened that poetry was in abeyance; prose fiction was making its way half in the dark; history was but just rising and philosophy, though still much cultivated, had not got out of the strangling grasp of Locke. Even if these propositions be disputable, the fact of the predominance of oratory in Greece is not nor is the thoroughness (surpassing even that of the treatment of tragedy) which was accorded to its study.

Inadequate, however, as was the treatment of prose kinds in general by the Greeks, even with such examples before them as Plato and Thucydides and Herodotus, they *did* treat them: and their treatment of the main critical aspects of prose was, if not always well directed, even more searching and thorough than their treatment of verse. They did not neglect rhythm as it was neglected, with rare exceptions, by all modern criticism till recently. They bestowed upon prose diction much of the sometimes to us not fully intelligible, but constantly fruitful,

care which they had also bestowed on the diction of poetry. They hit at once on the great fundamental principle—that while ordinary language breeds clearness, language of an unfamiliar character (from whatever source that unfamiliarity may be derived) breeds the power of *striking*—which again not all modern critics, nor even the majority of modern critics, seem to have been able to grasp. And then they hit upon the Figures.

A good deal of evil—too much some may think—has here been spoken of the Figures: it will, at any rate, dispense us from saying any more in this place, though the occasion for doing so may recur. But the good of them as an exercise—as, in the language of their own curious technique, a *progymnasma*—cannot be exaggerated. Short of the merest rote-work, the consideration of them, the realisation of what they meant, the investigations necessary to refer to one or the other head the phrases of the great writers, were all of them critical processes, the defect rather than the excess of which is to be reproached upon most modern criticism. Exclaim as we may against the practice of ticketing a peculiarity of style as if it were an atom, scientifically isolated, foreordained from the creation of things, and merely gathered and applied by the writer—yet it required at least some exercise of the pure critical spirit to separate this atom, consider it, class it. Figure-hunting and figure-shaping may have been aberrations of the critical spirit, but they showed that spirit: they may have led too many to acquiesce in mere terminology, but they showed the way to something very different from any such acquiescence.

If, finally, we turn to the results of Greek criticism as applied to Greek authors, we come to a region necessarily of doubt, if not exactly of dread. The preoccupations of the writers in various directions, which have already been mentioned, and the occasional difficulty of placing ourselves at their point of view, make the necessary adjustments difficult, but they do not make them hopeless.

In Homeric criticism, the oldest, the largest, and in some respects at least the most interesting department of the whole subject, we find less difference from somewhat similarly situated

bodies of criticism in other times than might be expected by some—as little as might be expected by others. As with Shakespeare, as with Dante, as with Cervantes, as with Molière, we find a vast body of unintelligent, if respectable, plodding, and of futile, if occasionally ingenious, crotchet and hypothesis. As in those cases, we find the phenomenon, curious if it were not so familiar, of a sort of personal partisanship or antipathy—two things the most unfavourable to criticism, yet the most frequently found in connection with it.[1] What we do not find, in any satisfactory measure, is literary criticism, pure and simple. The critics are constantly drawn away to side questions, after a fashion which is only more excusable than similar conduct in modern times because of the very different relations in which Homer stood to the Greeks We have talked (Heaven knows!) nonsense enough about Shakespeare as it is How much more should we have talked if he had been at once the oldest and greatest of our men of letters, the most ancient literary repository of our history, and a kind of Scripture, a religious document, as well? To the Greek Homer was all this, and more than all this. To the student of language he presented the oldest literary exponent of it; to the lover of poetry the admittedly sovereign poet. But neither could bring himself to regard him merely in these lights. The Greeks cared less than the Romans, and very much less than most modern nations, for personal genealogy the personal grudge and jealousy which is the ugliest feature of the Greek character, but which is probably inseparable from small democratic societies, made too strongly against this. Very rarely do we find in Greeks any of the feeling which made Romans cherish the notion of being descended from the fabulous companions of Æneas, and from the perhaps not fully historical heroes of the monarchy and the early republic—which, to this day, makes all, save foolish fanfarons of freedom from prejudice, rejoice in the possession, or regret the absence, of a Crusading ancestor. On

[1] Probably the very temperament, which spurs the critic on to his business, afflicts him with this thorn in the flesh. I should not be surprised if examples of it were found in the present volume. But it has been kept down as far as possible.

the other hand, local patriotism and local pride were as notoriously strong in the Greek breast; and to the latest periods we find, not merely Homer but even Herodotus, treated exclusively as if they were stores of flattering or unflattering particulars about the critic's birthplace and its history. Again, most Greeks were religious, if not quite in our way, and almost all Greeks were interested in philosophy. With religious and even with philosophical questions Homer had been for ages (even at the beginning of the bulk of the literature that we have) so intimately associated that few could disentangle themselves from the associations. If we refuse to remember that the questions discussed resemble rather the questions of Original Sin, or of Innate Ideas, than those of Classic and Romantic, it may astonish us that age after age should busy itself unweariedly with the discussion of Homer's moral or immoral purpose in depicting the scenes between Helen, Paris, and Aphrodite, between Zeus and Hera with the cestus, instead of dilating upon the character-force of the first scene and the voluptuous beauty of the second. But if we realise the motives which actuated them, we shall be less surprised to find so little literary criticism of Homer.

We have far more in regard to the Tragedians, and for obvious reasons: indeed we have more strictly literary criticism in regard to the drama than to any other division of Greek literary art. The estimates of the Three in general seem to have been not very different from what we should expect, but still somewhat different. The magnificence of Æschylus struck the scrupulous Greek taste as too often approaching bombast, and we look with surprised disappointment for so much as a single appreciation of his unequalled choruses (that of Dion, noted above, is slight and little to the point). With the Greek public generally Euripides seems, on the whole, and putting different times together, to have been the favourite of the three, and if the critics were less favourable to him, it was rather for extra-literary than for literary reasons. Public and critics together seem to have felt for Sophocles that special esteem, as distinguished, perhaps, from actual enthusiasm, which has descended to us moderns as a sort of venerable convention—to be ac-

quiesced in even when we do not actively share it, and to be transformed occasionally into vehement championship. Only from Longinus do we learn that Sophocles was considered to be far from impeccable, but to atone for his faults by his beauties: and Longinus himself, unfortunately, does not tell us what the faults were.

The Orators have naturally been discussed with greater minuteness than any other group, nor have the results of the discussion been much interfered with by modern study. The pre-eminence of Demosthenes was as much "matter of breviary" with Dionysius as with Longinus, with Longinus as with Hermogenes: and if Aristotle says little about his mighty contemporary, we know what the great ox was that trod on his tongue. Necessarily the criticism bears largely—indeed almost entirely—on the oratorical effect; but this effect, narrowly studied as it was, in the hopes of, at any rate to some extent, reproducing it, was analysed into parts which had not a little to do with literature. And, except in Longinus himself (some of whose best remarks are on the orators), there is no chapter of Greek literary criticism richer than the commentaries of Dionysius on these orators generally.

In the same way, Plato seems to have early won, and easily kept, his proper place at the head of philosophers who are men of letters, while the more mannered graces of Isocrates seem, at least generally, to have been put in their proper position. That so obvious, and at the same time so complicated and tempting, a contrast as that of the historical manners of Thucydides and Herodotus should escape quickwitted students was of course impossible; but here those drawbacks, to which reference has been made above, are specially apparent. The animus of Dionysius against the one is as patent, though not quite so stupid, as that of Plutarch or the pseudo-Plutarch against the other; and on the whole the ancient critics seem to have stuck, with surprising want of energy and acuteness, in the commonplace contrast of the instructive and the amusing, instead of going on to the far more interesting contrast of strict literary manner which the two authors offer.

Of the other kinds we have much more scattered and less

satisfactory observations. The Greeks were clearly not happy with their Comedy; they were half ashamed of Aristophanes, who might suffice for the glory of a whole literature; and they seem to have too often ranked the ingenious and fertile, but distinctly thin and "pretty," talent of Menander above his The same curious kind of mistaken belittling would appear to have hung upon Lyric Both upon these and several other kinds, from Dithyramb to Mimiambics. they remind us of the apologetic remarks of our own eighteenth-century censors on the work of their own time, which, from the point of view of universal literature, will last longest and rank highest—fiction, essay, and the like. In fact, this mistaken calculus of appraisement of kinds is one of the main notes of the whole subject.

The punishment, as usual, has been adjusted to the crime, and the merit, as usual also, has met with its reward from the secure judgment of the world. The more a man knows Greek literature the more deeply will he be impressed with the inestimable services which, in criticism as elsewhere, the Greeks rendered to humanity. But the more he knows other literatures, besides Greek, the more will he be convinced of the necessity of enlarging, extending, and at the same time correcting, the Greek point of critical view.

BOOK II

LATIN CRITICISM

"*At demonstrare virtutes, vel si quando ita incidat vitia, id . . . maxime proprium est.*"—QUINTILIAN.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE QUINTILIAN—CICERO, HORACE, SENECA THE ELDER, VARRO.

THE CONDITIONS OF LATIN CRITICISM — CICERO — HIS ATTITUDE TO LUCRETIUS — HIS RHETORICAL WORKS — HIS CRITICAL VOCABULARY — HORACE — THE 'AD PISONES' — ITS DESULTORINESS — AND ARBITRARY CONVENTIONALITY — ITS COMPENSATIONS — BRILLIANCY — TYPICAL SPIRIT — AND PRACTICAL VALUE — THE 'SATIRES' AND 'EPISTLES' — "DECLAMATIONS" — THEIR SUBJECTS: EPIDEICTIC AND FORENSIC — THEIR INFLUENCE ON STYLE — SENECA THE ELDER — THE "SUASORIES" — THE 'CONTROVERSIES': THEIR INTRODUCTIONS — VARRO.

The conditions of Latin criticism.

THOSE who direct their literary ideas by considerations of what they think likely to happen, or of what they think ought to have happened, would probably expect — neither without some reason nor without a certain amount of confirmation from experience — a considerable development of literary criticism under the Latin dispensation.[1] In the first place. the Romans had what the Greeks at first lacked, and afterwards too often disdained, that oppor-

[1] I am not aware of any work, corresponding to Egger's, in reference to Latin Criticism But in English there is an Essay of the first excellence on the subject by the late Mr Henry Nettleship (reprinted at vol. ii. p. 44 of his *Lectures and Essays*, Oxford, 1895). In my case old personal obligations were not needed to deepen the admiration which every one, who would even like to be a scholar, must feel for Mr Nettleship's work. I am here, however, to demur to his opening division of criticism into "criticism of philosophy, which investigates the principles of beauty," and "isolated and spontaneous judgments, never rising beyond personal impression." It is one main purpose of this book to show that a third course is possible and desirable, by way of the wide and systematic comparison of the manifestations of literary beauty in the accomplished work of letters.

tunity of Comparison, which, as has been said so often, is the very life and soul and breath of the higher and better critical exercise. In the second place, the whole literature of their classical period was itself a kind of critical imitation—sometimes pretty slavish, sometimes freer—of Greek: and it was practically impossible for a Roman to write without the exercise, independent or second-hand, of processes of study and thought which were critical or nothing. Against this must be set the facts—first, that the Latin literary genius was somewhat timid, that it felt itself rebuked by the majesty of Greece; and secondly, that the tendency of the race was not, till it was much mixed with others, very decidedly literary. Few Romans dared to approach the masterpieces of Greek literary art in a thoroughly critical spirit, and fewer had the sense of literature which might have enabled them to do so usefully. Further, their own period of consummate production was distinctly short, and not excessively fruitful, while those authors of their own to whom they devoted most attention stimulated only certain kinds of criticism. Virgil and Cicero are very great writers, doubtless, but everybody does not feel much enthusiasm for the first, and some people do not feel much enthusiasm for the second. The curious perfection of Horace is, after all, as limited as it is curious—there are no vistas in it; and the same may be said of the easy flow of Livy, the artificial, and, for its range, intense idiosyncrasy of Sallust, and the artful fancy of Ovid. These six writers seem to have always attracted the lion's share of Roman admiration, though at one time there might be a taste for the tricks, precious or slightly obscure, of Seneca in prose and Persius in verse, at another for other things. For their two most poetical poets, Lucretius and Catullus, the Romans never seem to have felt any deep or widespread admiration; their proseman of greatest genius, Tacitus, came too late, and was too unpopular in his sentiments, to attract much. Even so late as the latter days of Quintilian, when the Silver Age itself was drawing to a close, we find that it was customary to devote chief attention to Greek, and that it was thought necessary to argue for Latin as for a novice, who, if well trained

and encouraged, might become a pretty fighter in time. As for Cicero's time, there is no reason to suppose him an exception: yet we know how, when not in full public dress, he takes refuge in Greek at every moment, and sometimes seems almost inclined to echo a phrase of Ascham's in the dawn of modern English letters, and say it would be "more easier" for him to write in Greek, as it was for the author of the *Toxophilus* to have written in Latin.

Cicero.

It is, however, from Cicero that Roman literary criticism, properly so called, begins,[1] and he, with Horace, almost exhausts our supply of it from the days before the Empire. Yet he prepares us for the disappointments which meet us in Latin criticism even more than in Greek. That Cicero's interest in literature was great no one would dream of denying. His letters swarm with quotations and literary allusion; he is constantly arranging for new bookcases and new books; he no sooner has enforced (he never had much voluntary) leisure than he sets to work to write, to translate, to compose, to discuss. But the general inconveniences just noted, and some others of a particular nature, prevent him from being of much importance as a critic. He thought himself (as Quintilian later thought him) a philosopher, and he devoted much time to composing agreeable but extremely diluted copies of the Platonic dialogues. He was an orator not merely by profession but by taste, and he has left us (even excluding the pretty certainly spurious *Ad Herennium*) a very respectable bulk of Rhetorical work. But, as we shall presently see more in detail, most of this belongs altogether to the non-literary side of Rhetoric. Still, in default of some regular treatise (which was hardly to be expected), it is to

[1] The actual primacy is assigned to a verse canon of the Ten Latin Comic Poets by a certain Volcatius Sedigitus, who may be close to 100 B.C. This "stupid production," as Mr Nettleship unkindly but most justly calls it, may be found in his Essay (so often quoted) in Aulus Gellius, xv. 24, or in Baehrens' *Poetæ Latini Minores*, vi. 279. The six-fingered one puts Cæcilius first, Plautus second, Terence sixth, Ennius tenth, *antiquitatis causa*. He had, of course, borrowed the "canon" system from the Alexandrians, among whose most dubious services to criticism the arrangement of such things must be placed. There are touches of literary and critical reference in Ennius, in the Prologues of Terence, &c., but nothing that need delay us.

his abundant, varied, and interesting correspondence that we should look for material, and we find very little of it. Here is a joke on the habit of Aristarchus (and indeed of other critics), the habit of marking as spurious anything they do not like: there an equally jocular introduction of rhetorical technicalities; elsewhere a rather curious but more linguistic than literary disquisition on the way in which innocent words and phrases acquire, half by accident, awkward double meanings, or slip into the single bad meaning only. There is a passage of some interest in a letter to Atticus about Cicero's lost Greek history of his consulship, where he describes himself as having used up all Isocrates' perfume-shop, and the cabinets of his disciples, and even Aristotelian pigments.[1]

His attitude to Lucretius.

But the most direct and famous piece of pure literary criticism in the letters is an unlucky one. Cicero of course came before—or rather himself led—the most brilliant age of Latin, and could not have so much as seen the work of Virgil, of Horace, much less of Ovid, and others. But he could and he did know Lucretius, whose work an absurd tradition has it that he even revised. And what does he say of this mighty poet, who unites the poignancy of Catullus to the sustained grasp of Virgil, and adds a sublimity unknown to both? The manuscripts are said to read: *Lucretii poemata, ut scribis, ita sunt: multis luminibus ingenii multæ tamen artis.*[2] The earlier editors most naturally considered this sentence nonsense. No doubt the opposition of *ingenium* and *ars* is a common thing, almost a commonplace, in Latin. But would any one, unless he had a thesis to prove, dream of regarding *tamen* as admissible here? of translating it as if it were *necnon?* There is, of course, a certain paradoxical sense in which, at the end of the nineteenth century, a brisk young critic might say of Mr X., "He has plenty of brains, *and yet* he really knows how to write." But this is not in the least Roman; and it is Ciceronian rather less than it is Roman generally. Some, recognising that there must have been a *non*

[1] *Ad Att.*, ii. 1: *Mous autem liber totum Isocratis μυροθήκιον, atque omnes ejus discipulorum arculas, ac nonnihil etium Aristotelia pigmenta consumpsit.*

[2] *Ep. Ad Quint., Frat.*, ii. 11 (9 in some edd.)

somewhere, put it before *multæ*, and suppose that Cicero, as if he had been accustomed to Virgilian smoothness, thought Lucretius rough. But this, from his own verses, is very unlikely The natural emendation is to put the *non* (as till recently it used always to be supplied) before *multis*, which emendation, and which alone, makes the sentence run as, without prejudice on the score of the special meaning, we should expect it to run: "The poems of Lucretius are, as you say, not very full of brilliancy in genius, but show plenty of art."

Supposing this to be so, some have tried to make out that Cicero's well-known dislike of the Epicurean tenets accounts for the unfavourable criticism. So much the worse for him as a literary critic if it was so. A man who cannot taste Shelley because Shelley attacks Christianity, or laugh at the *Twopenny Postbag* because Moore was a Whig, may be, and very likely is, an honour to his species as a man, but the less said about him as a critic of literature the better. But there is no real probability of such a plea having any foundation. We shall see what Quintilian says about Lucretius later: we know that very few other Latin writers say anything about him at all. Cicero, who would fain have been a poet, and who sometimes could hammer out a tolerable hexameter,[1] could not as a mere craftsman, as a mere student of Rhetoric, fail to appreciate something of the "art" of Lucretius. The stately volume of those magnificent hexameters—the *ne plus ultra* of their kind in more ways than one or two—could not but appeal to him as a mere connoisseur of Latin rhythm, which (put him high or low in general literature) he most certainly was. The difference in comparison with Ennius, as a

[1] It has been urged upon me that my judgment of Cicero's verse is rather harsh, and that he at any rate made some progress towards the Lucretian hexameter before Lucretius. It may be so; tolerably careful and tolerably wide students of literature know that these things are always "in the air," and that, sometimes if not always, you find them in the poetaster before you find them in the poet. But after reading all Cicero's extant verse two or three times over, seeking diligently for mitigations of judgment, I am still afraid that "Cousin Cicero, you will never be a poet," would have been, and justly, the verdict of Lucretius, had they stood to one another in the relations in which Swift and Dryden stood.

matter of art, was for such a man as Cicero simply unmistakable.

But the qualities of the Lucretian "genius," as distinguished from the Lucretian art, were not suited to attract Cicero—were, we may say, without fear of injustice, suited to attract very few Romans of the true type.[1] That type was, as far as the defects went, distinctly "barbarian," in the sense in which Mr Matthew Arnold (very unjustly) applied the word to the English aristocracy—full of vigour, instinct with the faculty of ruling, magnanimous after a fashion, but impenetrable to ideas, only formally religious, shutting off its keen perception of a certain justice with huge blinkers, and, above all, curiously insensible to the vague, the mystical, the sense of wonder. Now, Lucretius, though he had chosen for himself a creed approaching mere materialism, had treated it in a fashion constantly and unabashedly ideal. It does not need the "flaming bastions of the world" or the sense of the *néant*, splendidly as he can describe both, to awake the poetical faculty in him. He can make poetry out of the *exiguum clinamen*, and out of things less promising if even more abstract still. With him it is always "the riding that does it"; the subject hardly matters at all. Lucretius, in short, was one of the great poets—sheerly and merely as poets—of the world. The didactics in which our eighteenth-century versemen so dismally failed offer no more difficulties to him than a love-poem or a flowery description. He will do you a science, or an atomic system, as another might do an Odyssey or a story of Lancelot. Now this was what the ancients, with all their acuteness and originality, could seldom understand or like; and what Cicero (a man of genius in some ways, but something of a Philistine and nothing of a poet) could like least of all those who can in any way be compared

[1] It is one of Ovid's titles (*v. infra*) to credit as a critic that he did see the value of Lucretius, and expressed it in the well-known couplet (*Amor.*, i. 15. 25)—

"*Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti,*
Exitio terr[illegible]rum dabit una dies."

Virgil's still better known quit-rent for his borrowings (*Georg.*, ii. 490) is a mere praise of the Lucretian *free-thought*, with no reference to poetry. But the praise (no mean one) of having appreciated Lucretius better than any other Roman is due to Statius (*v. infra*, pp. 268-270).

with him. Many of the beauties of the Lucretian imagination would be no doubt simply lost on him; and others he would consider wasted on the wrong subjects, if not positively applied in the wrong manner. Let us, however, for fairness' sake, accept the MS. reading, allow that *tamen* may be the same or nearly the same as *necnon*, and further allow that as Marcus is only echoing words of Quintus which we do not possess, equity would in any case require that we should lay no very great stress on his own. There will still remain the objection that a poem of this character and importance, brought directly under his notice, and already as is clear within his knowledge, does not tempt him to do anything more than echo his correspondent's words in a cut-and-dried formula which would be applicable to any tolerably good composition in verse, and which does not touch nor approach the idiosyncrasy of the poem itself. We cannot therefore very greatly regret that we have so little pure literary criticism from him. But still we must, for the sake of completeness, give some account of his Rhetorical works, which, in a manner, play the same complementary part to the *Ars Poetica* of Horace that the twin treatises of the Stagirite play to each other.

His Rhetorical works.

There is, however, no small difference between the values of the Rhetorical works themselves. The *Ad Herennium*, even if it were as certainly Cicero's as it is almost certainly not his, would require very small attention, for it is a strict *Techne* or Art of Rhetoric, of the kind which we have thoroughly examined in the First Book, rigidly limited to Oratory, and containing nothing that may not be found in a dozen or a hundred other places. The *De Inventione*—more probably, if still not certainly, Cicero's—is equally technical, and has hardly anything of interest for us except a quotation from Curio, which gives the lie direct to the "saw" of our "dead shepherd,"[1] *Nemo potest uno aspectu neque præteriens in amorem incidere.* It is to Cicero's credit that he cites this as a rhetorical assumption, as saying that what happens rarely does not happen at all. The *De Oratore* looks more promising, especially as there are references, in its very *exordia*, to the

[1] *As You Like It*, iii. 5. 82.

study of letters and its difficulty. There is a passage of some interest in Book II., cap. 12, 13, on the connection of oratory and history, with a short review of the Greek historians; and another of somewhat wider reference in cap 7 of Book III., besides, it may be, others still here and there, especially that which begins about the 37th chapter of the third book. The *Brutus* is the best of all, with its survey of the Latin orators and its account of the author's literary education. The *Orator* deals still more closely with oratorical style, as does the little tract, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*. The *Partitiones* and the *Topica* are again mainly, if not even merely, technical.

It will be seen from this, not only that there is little purely literary criticism in Cicero, but that it is rather unjust to expect any from him. It was not his business; he had hardly any examples of it before him (and Cicero, like most other Latins, was a man who could do little without a pattern); the mere subject-matter (at least as far as Latin was concerned) was far from very abundant or specially interesting. Moreover, he was constantly occupied on other things. We know, from passages cited above, and others, that he had the purely grammatical and lexicographical interest which was so strong in the Romans; he must have had real feeling for poetry, or he would not be so constantly quoting it, nor would he have made his unequal attempts at writing it; he would fain, in the same way, have been a historian. But these were mere pastimes; and both from that vanity which was his master passion, and from an honest conviction which, as we have seen, was widely spread in antiquity, he seems to have thought Oratory the roof and crown of things literary, the queen of literary kinds, to which all others were ancillary, pedagogic, mere exercising-grounds and sources of convenient ornament. No one so thinking could make any great proficiency in literary criticism, and Cicero did not make any such.

This estimate of Cicero may seem audaciously unfair, if not grossly incompetent, to those who accept the more usual one. So far as much, if not all, very high authority goes, I must acknowledge, though I do not recant, my heresy. Mr Nettleship, for instance, while acknowledging that Cicero

"threw his whole strength into the criticism of oratorical prose," still speaks of his work, especially of the *Brutus*, with something like enthusiasm, claims "genius" and "fulness of light" for him, and even makes what is to me, I confess, the astonishing remark that he "follows in the same track as the Greek critics in all probability had done before him, as undoubtedly Dionysius *and the author of the* Περὶ Ὕψους did after him." I should have myself thought that if there were two critics who might be pedantically symbolised as A and not-A, they were Cicero and Longinus. But to give the other side, in the case of so important a client with such an admirable advocate, I may say that Mr Nettleship, while admitting Cicero's tendency to the wooden placing and comparison borrowed from the Greeks, and naturally made more wooden by the Latins, and granting his inadequacy as to History (which he, like so many others whom we have seen and shall see, regards as a mere *ancilla* of Oratory), claims for him the origination of the principle that the general as well as the connoisseurs must stamp the value of a work (*Brutus*, 183), approves his distaste (*De Oratore*, iii. 96) for "precious" style, and gives a most interesting *cento* from the *Brutus* (93, 125, 139, 143, 148, 201, 261, 274, 301). In these characterisations of the great orators he finds qualities of the highest kind, completing the panegyric by saying, "His usual prolixity is thrown aside, and he returns to obey the true laws of expression. As a critic he can write with all Tacitus' terseness and without any of Tacitus' affectation." I quote, though—and indeed because—I cannot agree.

His Critical Vocabulary.

One point of great interest, however, in which there may be general agreement as to Cicero's achievement, Mr Nettleship did not treat in his Essay, though a passage therein leads straight to it. This passage gives a very useful list[1] (elsewhere referred to) of some of the technical terms of criticism which appear to have accumulated in Greek literature during the post-Aristotelian period. Some of these are

[1] *τραχύς, αὐστηρός, αὐθαδής, αὐχμηρός, εὐπινής, στρυφνός, συνεσπασμένος, ἀντίτυπος, ἀρχαϊκός, πυκνός, δεινός*, &c. Mr Nettleship gives in all thirty-three, to which, I daresay, one could add as many more from the later rhetoricians, Longinus, and others down to Photius.

either used in their ordinary sense, or in senses easily and closely tropical; others are more far-fetched, and, as has also been noted elsewhere, remind one of the technicalities of wine-tasting (especially in French), or of pictorial art. Some are very hard to render exactly in other languages.

It has always been noticed that Cicero—a master of language, and though far from the pedantic prejudice which then tabooed Greek words in Latin, just as it now taboos French words in English, always anxious to enrich his own tongue when he could—has shown special ingenuity in translating, paraphrasing, and adding to this rhetorical and critical dictionary. It is not, however, very many years since the interesting labour of a French scholar[1] made it possible, without very considerable trouble on one's own part, to get the results of this process ready for study. With the Ciceronian terms of mere forensic Rhetoric (though all students of the Greek and Latin Rhetoricians will agree with M. Causeret that these terms have been, with a very mischievous result, transferred to other branches) we need not busy ourselves. It is under the usual head of "Elocution" that we shall find most to interest us. The abundance of the Ciceronian vocabulary every one will recognise; it is less certain whether we are to admire its precision. But it is at least an innocent, and may sometimes be a profitable, pleasure to classify the usages of *inusitatum* and *insolens*, to separate the *nuances* of *obsoletum*, *priscum*, and *vetustum*, of *grandia* and *gravia*, of *majestas* and *splendor*. The Latin rather than the Teutonic languages admit the distinctions of *juncta*, *cohærentia*, *apta*, and *coagmentata*, if distinction there be; but it would be of real value to ascertain whether there was any between *modus* and *numerus*. Sometimes at least it seems as if it might coincide with that between "rhythm" and "metre": while often *numerus* itself seems to be "rhythm."

By no means uninteresting, again, are the numerous metaphorical expressions from actual physiology — *lacerti*, *sanguis*, *nervi*, *succus*, *exsanguis*, *enervatus* — which we find applied to

[1] *Etude sur la Langue de la Rhétorique et de la Critique Littéraire dans Cicéron.* Par C. Causeret. Paris, 1886.

style, and the still more numerous but vaguer terms, most of them with modern equivalents, which express its qualities by comparison with moral ones.

It is impossible not to see what an influence the use of such terms by such an author must have had, and we shall find evidences much later (in Pliny, for instance) that the language of literary criticism at Rome yielded in nothing to that beautiful dialect which enables our own censors to speak of a novel as "assertive and challenging," of the "swiftness and fusion" of its style. But whether the influence was as beneficial as it was great is perhaps rather a different question.[1]

Horace.

The contrast between the limited and partial relevance of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* to literary criticism, and the complete if still limited relevance of his *Poetics*, is repeated far more pointedly in that between the Rhetorical works of Cicero and the so-called *Ars Poetica* of Horace. It is, in fact—though the most ardent admirers of the Venusian would fain defend it from being intentionally and originally an Art of Poetry at all—the most complete, nay, the only complete, example of literary criticism that we have from any Roman.[2] As in other similar cases, before saying much about it in the way of secondary comment, it will be well to give a fairly full analysis of it, which can be the better done because of its extreme shortness. The famous tags with which it abounds, to an extent almost unmatched, may be sometimes but need not be always, given in full.

The Ad Pisones.

In form it is merely an *Epistola ad Pisones*, and plunges at once into its subject, without any attempt at preliminary argument or flourish.

The representations of art, like the presentations of nature, must be characterised by appropriateness of parts; you must not simply join anything to anything else. Perhaps, says an

[1] It has not seemed necessary to go through the literary passages of the *Orations*, though some, the *Pro Archia* especially, are not infertile in them. "What *counsel* says is not evidence," whatever else it is.

[2] Here, however, as elsewhere, the fatally parasitic character of the whole literature comes in. There is little doubt (see Nettleship, *op. cit.*) that the piece was very closely modelled upon the work of a certain Neoptolemus of Parium, an Alexandrian critic, whose date is not known.

objector; but surely painters and poets enjoy liberty of fancy. Certainly; but still some propriety must be observed. Even ornament must be adjusted to the subject; and even when correctness itself is specially attempted, defects wait on the attempt—obscurity on brevity, bombast on flights, tameness on simplicity. Take care that your subject suits both your style and your powers.

Then, as to vocabulary? There is no reason why old words should not be resuscitated and new ones coined, provided that both things are done "with brains" and discretion. Usage is the arbiter, and what usage will not admit must be content to perish. As for metre, the kinds appropriate to the various subjects have been long ago settled, though by whom is not always known—hexameters for Epic by Homer, elegiacs for less important matter by somebody or other, iambics for satire by Archilochus, and so on with tragedy, comedy, lyric, and the rest. It is not wise to alter this established order.

In the same way, the established styles and characters must be maintained: a tragic hero must not speak like a comic one, or *vice versâ*; and you must not attempt new lights on the character of accepted heroes and heroines like Achilles and Odysseus and Medea. At the same time, you need not cling to the stock subjects, and if you take quite novel ones you may handle your character as you like, provided it keep uniformity throughout. But you may be wiser if you stick to the old.[1] If you do, do not begin too magniloquently; bustle your reader well along in the action; and drop the ungrateful parts of the story.

As before for traditional characters, so for the stock parts. Generalise and conventionalise wisely; let your boys be childish, your youths fond of sport, reckless, and fickle; your men of full age, business-like and prudent; your old men praisers of the past, sluggish, grudging, and so forth. In short—Keep to the Type

[1] Here comes in one of the most famous and often-quoted of the "tags" —*difficile est proprie communia dicere*, a sentence which, hackneyed as it is, is not altogether easy to translate fully even by itself, and becomes in the context less easy still.

In play-writing be careful how you utilise the double opportunity of representation and narrative. Do not let ugly things appear on the actual stage. Stick to your five acts; do not be prodigal of your *deus ex machina;* do not introduce a fourth personage. Keep your chorus to its business—moral sentiment, religious tone, and so forth. This caution introduces a long digression on the incursion of elaborate music into the stage, and on the combination (while keeping them *unmixed*) of Satiric Drama and Tragedy.

Then, with the almost shorthand abruptness of transition which characterises the poem, we pass to an incidental consideration of metres. An iambic is a long syllable put after a short one, and you arrange them in batches of six with, in certain places only, spondees for a change. Do not take too many licences: stick to the Greek. If your ancestors were fools enough to admire Plautus you need not. They say Thespis invented drama, or at least tragedy. Æschylus improved it and made it magniloquent. Then came the Old Comedy—rather too licentious, so that it had to pull in its sails and drop its chorus. We have tried all sorts, not without success, but the labour of the file is absolutely necessary. The idea of poetic madness and excess is all nonsense. If I cannot write great poetry I can teach others how to write it. Be careful of your subject, and do not attend to tuneful trifles.

You must either instruct or delight, or both; you must not write romantic and prodigious extravagances. Mix pleasure with profit and you are safe. You need not be absolutely faultless, but avoid faults as much as you can. Be careful to suit the style to the subject as much as possible, and do not "pad." Mediocre poetry is intolerable.

Finally, do not be in a hurry to publish; invite friendly criticism; do not force yourself; destroy a good deal. For *nescit vox missa reverti.*

The influence of poets is mythically signified by the stories of Orpheus, who moved beasts, and Amphion, who built Thebes by song. Homer came next, and was famous. Tyrtæus roused men to war. Many kinds of poetry have been discovered since, and they all need hard work to cultivate them with success.

Some remarks on recitation follow, and then the lines on which friendly criticism should proceed are drawn, and the piece ends rather ambiguously with a reference to the fate of Empedocles.

Its desultoriness

Now, in criticising this criticism we must of course take into consideration the plea that Horace may not have meant to give a regular treatise even on Dramatic Poetry, but merely to throw out a few observations for the benefit of a friend. It is still more obvious that we must not saddle him with all the rubbish of corollary and comment with which he has been loaded (sometimes without his having in the least deserved or provoked it) by the "Classical" critics of the 16th–18th centuries. Yet not merely equitable but generous allowances of this kind will still leave the piece open to pretty severe comment. In the first place, its desultoriness is excessive, even extravagant. Much licence in this respect no doubt must be allowed to the "mixer of the useful and the pleasant" by means of verse-didactics. But no possible licence will cover Horace's method, or absence of method. He begins with a sufficiently lively diatribe against inconsistency of design and want of harmony of parts, then slides to methods of composition, thence to vocabulary, thence to the technical divisions of prosody, thence to stock characters and the selection of subject, gives cautions as to the minor and more arbitrary proprieties of the stage, indulges in a little bit of literary history, returns to metres, insists on the importance of self- and other criticism. Then he shifts artfully to the contrast between Greek emulation and Roman shopkeeping covetousness, extols Orpheus and Amphion, Homer and Tyrtæus, excuses faults if they are not too many, but will not tolerate mere even mediocrity, cautions against flattering hearers, and ends with a description, half sarcastic, half rallying the sarcasm, of bad poets. If it were not for its vividness and its constellation of glittering phrases, nobody could see in such a thing aught but a mere congeries of desultory observations.

Still more indisputable is the singular spirit of routine—of red-tape—which pervades the piece. Aristotle (whom Horace follows without direct acknowledgment, and by no means slavishly, but still on the whole) had been sufficiently positive, and

not seldom a little arbitrary; but he had carefully abstained from mere red-tape. Horace, in his prescription of the five acts, and his proscription of the fourth actor, measures that tape off in a fashion which implies one of two things, both of them bad—either implicit belief in purely arbitrary rules, or indifference to the mischief that such rules may do. Elsewhere, though his good sense sometimes interferes to advantage, he is, though less meticulously, as slavishly conventional. You must use the consecrated metres, and no others, for the various subjects; you must keep to the accepted lineaments of well-known characters, and you must model your new ones strictly on types. Decency, propriety, convention—to these things you must look throughout. If you are really a great poet you may be allowed a "fault" or two, as a great beauty is allowed a mole, but still it is a "fault." And so this kind of pottering and peddling censorship goes on through the whole. We are at such an antithesis or antipodes to the Περὶ Ὕψους, that one sometimes feels inclined to give the *Ars Poetica* a third title and call it Περὶ μεσότητος, or *De Mediocritate*, so directly does it tend to produce the quality which, in one of its own happier moments, it denounces.

and arbitrary conventionality.

All this, I say, is undeniable, or, if it be denied, the denial is of no consequence. But the compensatory merits are very considerable. In the first place, it is no small thing to have got once more to purely, or almost purely, literary criticism, to have done with the sense that literature as such is only the second thought, the *parergon*, at best the mere means, not the end, to the critic. In the second place, it is a greater thing still to have our literary criticism, now that we have got it, done by such a man as Horace, one in whom the generation of the critic has not waited for the corruption of the poet,[1] and who has the peculiar gift of crisp remem-

Its compensations: Brilliancy.

[1] I had hoped that no reader would want explanation of this, but it has been hinted to me that some may. For them only, I note that the saying, the thought of which has found various and frequent expression, is slightly altered in form from Dryden, and is one of his happiest scholasticisms. It glances, utilising the old philosophical opposition-connection of γένεσις and φθορά, at the theory, put later by another person of genius more bluntly, that critics are those who "have failed in literature and art."

berable felicitous phrase. The few hundred lines of the little piece are positively "made of quotations." Every man of letters, at least, ought to have learnt it by heart in the original during his youth. Yet even to those who have not been thus favoured, but who have some tincture of Humanity, mere scraps and tags of it must often recall the actual context, or at least the sense. The first five-and-twenty lines contain, in the way of such "lights" of phrase, at least seven:—

> "Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.
> Risum teneatis, amici.
> Velut ægri somnia. . . .
> Pictoribus atque poetis
> Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas . . .
> Petimusque damusque vicissim.
> Purpureus . . . pannus . . .
> Currente rota cur urceus exit?"

And the proportion is well maintained throughout.

Typical spirit

But the greatest value of the piece, beyond all doubt, is the clear and distinct idea which it gives of one, and that the principal, side of the critical conception of literature in Roman times certainly, in all times more or less. Just as, and in the same manner as, we said that Longinus plays the exception among the critics of antiquity, so does Horace represent the rule. There is indeed something in other critics of antiquity of the spirit which makes Longinus pre-eminent, but it is not prominent in them. There is in the better of them, especially in Aristotle, much that is not in Horace; but what they have in common with him is the differentia of them all.

Of this latter spirit those worse points which we have noted in the piece are the caricature or corruption, the others are the rational embodiment and expression. "Observe order; do not grovel or soar too high; stick to the usage of reasonable and well-bred persons; be neither stupid nor shocking; above all, be like the best of your predecessors, stick to the norm of the class, do not attempt a perhaps impossible and certainly dangerous individuality." In short the false *mimesis*—imitation of previous art—is mixing herself up more and more with the

true *mimesis*, representation of nature. If it is not exactly true that, as a modern prose Horace has it, *Tout est dit*, at any rate the forms in which everything ought to be said have long been found out. You cannot improve on them: try to make the best use of them that you can.

and practical value.

It is needless to say with what hardly matched and certainly unsurpassed shrewdness and neatness Horace has—not merely in the tags, the phrases, the purple patches themselves noted above, but throughout—set forth, enforced, decorated his views. Except in a few extremest moods, when the whole world of literature seems to be at once painted red and strangled with the tape that paints it, he is never absurd; he is never even negligible. The most "dishevelled" Romantic may neglect him, but the neglect will always be at his own peril—he must be a Shakespeare, or at least a Marlowe, a Shelley, or at least a Beddoes, if he flies in the face of the Horatian precepts. These precepts even, in the opening, in the "mediocrity" remark, in the peroration and elsewhere, contain not a little antidote for their own bane. "Not worth writing" would be the Horatian verdict on many a "Classical" poem which the judge might acknowledge to be quite unobjectionably written; while on the other hand the evils of extravagance, of disproportion, of tedious and silly crotchet and caprice, at which he drives full from first to last, are real evils, and by no means to be minimised. It is not rash to say—though perhaps one must have read more literatures, and passed through more phases of literary judgment than one, before saying it with conviction—that there is no school or period of literary practice in which the precepts of Horace, when rightly taken, have lost, or are ever likely to lose, critical validity. To say this is to say a very great deal. But it is not inconsistent with—and it makes especially necessary—the further observation that the critical attitude of Horace is a wofully incomplete one. In the first place, he has left us no really "grasping" judgment of a single writer he has mentioned. He had not much room, but nobody could put a paragraph in a line better than he could, when he understood and cared for the matter. Horace

on Orpheus and Amphion, on Homer, nay, on Æschylus and Plautus, is *banal* — badly *banal*, one may add. But let us grant that the knack of luminous summarising of the individual was not, and could not be, yet born, was not even with Longinus, was not even fifteen hundred years after Horace. His shortcomings do not cease here. Here as elsewhere, except in a few passages of the graver philosophy of life, there is no "soul" in him. He has no enthusiasm, no passion. It is perhaps improper to bring together Horace and Mr Browning, but I never read the *Epistola ad Pisones* without thinking of certain lines of the latter:—

> "The fool! would he try a flight further and say,
> He never saw, never, before to-day,
> What was able to take his breath away—
> A face to lose youth for, to occupy age
> With the dream of, meet death with—why, I'll not engage
> But that, half in a rapture and half in a rage,
> I should toss him the thing's self, 'Tis only a duplicate,
> A thing of no value—take it, I supplicate.'"

Longinus, one feels, would have been in some danger of losing his literary loves on this principle; the modern critic can "say ditto to Mr Browning" over a thousand passages. But Horace was quite safe. He never felt this enthusiasm for author, or book, or page; and so he never tried, as others in their despairing way do, to render a reason for it.

The Satires and Epistles.

To those who consider criticism as a whole and historically, the enormous influence which the *Ars Poetica* has exercised must always give it the prerogative place among its author's critical work. But it is needless to say that he has other claims to appear here. And the pieces which give him these claims have by some been considered more important, as they certainly are more original. It is unnecessary to pick out *Pindarum quisquis* and the other literary references in the Odes, universally known, admirably expressed, but as criticism hardly more than a refashioning of *publica materies*. The Fourth and Sixth *Satires* of the First book, which are probably a good deal earlier than the adaptation from Neoptolemus, and the two *Epistles* of the Second

book, which may be taken as later, are serious documents. The Satires perhaps give a better opinion of Horace's talent than of his taste and temper. His critics had praised Lucilius against him; and without denying his predecessor all merit, he makes, though less generously, the sort of comment which even Dryden made on the rough versification and lack of art of the giant race before the flood. This (i. 4) naturally brought fresh attacks on him, and in i. 10 he returns to the subject, lashes the *fautores ineptos Lucili*, indulges in the too famous sneer at Catullus and Calvus, and with a touch of something which is perhaps not quite alien from snobbishness, boasts his intimacy and agreement not merely with Varius, Virgil, Pollio, Messala, among men of letters, but with Mæcenas and Octavius.

His general position here is easy enough to perceive, and there are of course defences for it. Among all our thousand fragments of Lucilius,[1] but two or three at most are long enough to give us any idea of his faculty of sustained composition. And fine as is the fragment to Albinus — with its Elizabethan reiteration of *virtus* at the beginning of the lines, its straight-hitting sense, and the positive nobility of its ethic — numerous as are the instances in the smaller scraps of *Romana simplicitas* and picturesque phrase, there is no doubt that the whole is rough and unfinished, not with the roughness of one who uses a rudimentary art, but of one who has not mastered — perhaps, as Horace insinuates, has not taken the trouble to master — one ready to his hand. But there is something of the Frenchman's "*We* are all princes or poets" about the tone of

[1] *Poet. Lat. Min.* (Baehrens), vi. 139 266. Our greatest English Latinists recently have been singularly unkind to this poet. Munro made what I can only call a violent attack on him: and Mr Nettleship, while allowing him "extraordinary vigour" and "the ring of Caius Gracchus" (see his Essay on the Satires (second series, where Munro's diatribe is quoted), practically indorses this. Against such judges I should not have a word to say on the linguistic side but I claim full *parrhesia* on the literary. The Virtue passage (which Munro specially refuses to except) is as rough as, say, Marston; but it has a far sincerer, loftier, and more truly poetical tone than anything of the kind in Horace, and than most things in Juvenal. And everywhere I see quality, passion, *phrase*. Here, at least, I can agree with Cicero (*De Orat.*, II. 6 and elsewhere), though *perurbanus* is not exactly the epithet that I should, from his extant writings, myself select for Lucilius.

Horace himself. He is, *mutatis mutandis*, too much in the mood of a *parvenu* who has just been admitted to an exclusive club, and thinks very meanly of poor wretches who are not entitled to use the club-paper.

On the other hand, Mr Nettleship is surely justified in calling the Epistles of the second book "the best of Horace's critical utterances," though perhaps they are not the most important. Indeed, their eulogist hastens to add that "it is the incomparable manner of the writer, the ease and sureness of his tread," which really interests the reader. It is so; but there is more in criticism than manner, and you must be right as well as felicitous. Horace is not exactly wrong, but he is limited—the Chrysostom of Correctness has acquired better breeding than he showed in the Satires, but he has not enlarged his view. The *horridus Saturnius* still strikes its own horror into him: he still girds at the ancients; and though in the epistle to Julius Florus there is some pleasant self-raillery, as well as an admirable picture of the legitimate poet, yet there is perhaps no piece of Horace which brings more clearly home to us the fact that he was after all, as he has been called, far more a critic of life than of literature, and much more seriously interested in the former than in the latter. So much the better for him perhaps; so much the better for all the ancients who more or less agreed with him. But that is a matter of argument: the fact remains.[1]

The third representative selected for Roman criticism of the latest Republic and earliest empire, the elder Seneca—"Seneca Rhetor"—is again of a different class and at a different standpoint, though he is very much nearer to Cicero than to Horace.

"*Declamations.*"

The declamations of antiquity had an influence on its prose style—and consequently an effect on its critical opinions of style both in verse and prose—which it is almost impossible to exaggerate. The practice of them began in boyhood; it formed almost the greater part of the higher education; and it appears to have been continued in

[1] Mr Nettleship justly and, considering his enthusiasm for Horace generously contrasts the "comprehensive sympathy" of Ovid (*Am.*, i. 15-19, *Trist.*, ii. 423) with the lack of the same quality in the Venusian.

later life not merely by going to the Schools to hear novices, but in actual practice, half exercise, half amusement, by orators and statesmen of the most established fame. It was a sort of mental fencing-school or gymnasium, to which those who wished to keep their powers in training resorted, even to the close of life. We know that Cicero composed, if he did not actually deliver, declamations up to the very end of his career; and, in a very different department of letters, we know from Seneca himself that Ovid, though not a constant, was a by no means infrequent, attendant of the schools, and either acquired or exercised his well-known fancy for turns and plays of words in prose as well as in verse.

In theory, and no doubt to some extent in practice also, these *meletæ*, or declamations, were permissible and desirable in all the branches of Rhetoric. But the examples which have come down to us, and the references that we possess to others, show us that, as, indeed, we should expect, Epideictic and Dicanic provided the chief subjects. The declamations of the former kind were those at which the satirists chiefly laughed—Hannibal crossing the Alps, Leonidas at Thermopylæ, Whether Cicero could decently have avoided death by making a bargain with Antony, and the like. To this kind of subject there could evidently be no limit, and it might sometimes pass, as in the Orations (which are after all only declamations) of Dion Chrysostom we know that it at least once did pass, into a regular literary Essay. But it seems more generally to have affected the fanciful-historic.

Their subjects: epideictic

The purely forensic declamation had some differences. As its object was not merely or mainly, like that of the other, to display cleverness, but to assist the acquisition and display of ability as a counsel, it fell into certain rather narrow and not very numerous grooves. Certain "hard cases," paradoxes of the law, seem from very early times to have been excogitated by the ingenuity of the rhetoricians, and the game was to treat these—on one side or the other, or both—with as much force, but above all with as much apparent novelty, as the speaker's wits could manage. A very favourite one was based on the venerable practice of allowing the victim

and forensic.

of a rape the choice of death for her violator or requiring him to marry her, with the *aporia*, "Suppose a man is guilty of two such crimes, and one girl demands death, the other marriage, what is to be done?" Or "Suppose a girl, situated like Marina in *Pericles*, but slaying her Lysimachus, not converting him. Released from her bondage, she presents herself as candidate for a priestess-ship. Is she eligible or not?"[1] The extremity of perverse fancy in this direction is perhaps reached by a pair of the declamations attributed to Quintilian,[2] in which the lover of a courtesan brings an action against her for administering a counter-philtre, so that he may love her no longer, and she may accept a wealthier suitor. But there is no limit to the almost diseased imagination of these Cases A city[3] is afflicted by famine, and a commissioner is sent to buy up grain, with orders to return by a certain day. He executes his commission successfully and quickly, but being driven into port in a third country by bad weather, sells the grain at a high price, buys twice as much elsewhere, and returns by the appointed time. But, meanwhile, the famine has grown so severe that the people have been driven to cannibalism, which his return direct with his first bargain would have prevented. Is he guilty or not guilty?

Their influence on style.

A very little consideration will show that both these classes of composition must have had great, permanent, and not altogether good effects on style. Both dealt with hackneyed subjects, and in both success was most likely to be achieved by "peppering higher," in various ways. The epideictic subjects suggested various forms of bombast, conceit, trick, from the use of poetical, archaic, or otherwise unfamiliar diction to the device of the mouther of whom Seneca tells us,[4] and who, declaiming on Greeks and Persians, stood a-tiptoe and cried, "I rejoice! I rejoice!" and only after a due pause explained the cause of his rejoicing. The forensic subjects tempted the racking of the brain for some new quibble, some fresh refine-

[1] Seneca, *Contr.*, i. 2.

[2] xiv. and xv. *Ed. cit. inf.* (p. 279 *note*), pp. 154-169.

[3] Ibid., xii. The so-called *Pasti Cadaveribus*. *Ed. cit. inf.*, p. 126.

[4] *Suas.*, ii. 17. *His* name, too, was Seneca; and the text is curiously worded.

ment or hair-splitting. Especially was this the case in the subdivision of what were called the *colores*—ingenious excuses for the parties, whence comes the special sense of our word colourable, and whereof Seneca makes a special heading, usually at the end of his articles. No pitch of mental wiredrawing, no extravagance of play on word or phrase, was too great for some declaimers, of whom a certain Murredius is Seneca's favourite Helot. In fact, in both classes, epideictic and forensic, one can see that a plain, forcible, manly style could only be commended by a combination of very unusual genius on the part of the speaker, and still more unusual taste and receptivity on the part of the audience. Their *sophos*, their *euge*, their *belle*,[1] were much more likely to be evoked by ingenious and far-fetched conceit than by solid reasoning and Attic style, which latter, indeed, on such trite subjects were nearly impossible.

For illustration of what has been said, the hodge-podge of Seneca is more valuable than the finished declamations of the Pseudo-Quintilian. These latter,[2] despite the absurdity, or at any rate the non-naturalness, of their subject, are sometimes rather accomplished pieces of writing in a very artificial style. The speech, *Pro Juvene contra Meretricem*, referred to above, is, in its whimsical way, a decidedly remarkable example of decadent prose. The crime of making some one cease to love is odd in itself; the complaint that you have been injured by being made to cease to love odder still. Besides, if you complain of this as an injury, do you not still love, and have you not, therefore, nothing to complain of? The topsyturvyfication is, it will be seen, complete. And the declaimer, whoever he was, treats his subject *con amore*. The tricks of his thought are infinite, and well suited with the artifices of his speech. In particular, every paragraph leads up to, and winds up with, a sort of variation on one general theme or *Leitmotiv*.

"To be compelled to hate is the one incurable form of disease."

[1] Of these equivalents of "Hear! hear!" or "Bravo!" the second is good adopted Latin of all times. The first, well known from Martial, is post-Augustan; the third (which Cicero did not much like) seems to have been both lukewarm and affected.

[2] *V. inf.*, p. 279 *sq.*

"There is some solace in being miserable in love. 'Tis a more cruel destiny to hate a harlot."

"He who cannot leave off hating a harlot is still her lover."

"The victim of a counter-philtre may hate one: he can love none."

Thinker and writer, it will be seen, are a sort of pair of bounding brothers: they stand on their heads, fling circles, intertwine limbs, take every non-natural posture, to the utmost possibility of intellectual acrobatics.

Seneca the Elder.

The Seneca book,[1] much more fragmentary, is also of its nature richer. It consists of one book of "Suasories" (examples of the symbouleutic or epideictic kind), and ten (by no means completely extant) of "Controversies" (Forensic subjects), the latter sometimes including introductions of interest to the writer's three sons—Novatus, afterwards Gallio, Seneca the Philosopher, and Mela, father of the poet Lucan—and usually concluding with a kind of *résumé* (called Excerpta) of their contents. The substance is made up of short extracts from the most celebrated declaimers of Rome, and a few Greeks, on the various subjects.

The Suasories.

They give us a really invaluable abundance, in all kinds, of rhetorical *loci communes*, tags, *pointes*, with which, from early and late practice, the mind of every educated man at Rome was simply saturated, and which could hardly fail to colour his style, either directly in the way of imitation, or indirectly in that of repulsion, and preference of extreme severity.

For instance, the first *Suasoria* deals with the question, "Shall Alexander cross the Ocean?" though the exact statement of question is lost altogether, with the beginning of the piece itself. It seems to have opened with a sort of abstract of general commonplaces, and then come the quotations. Argentarius [perhaps Marcus the epigrammatist] addresses the conqueror: "Halt! the world that is thine calls thee back; we have conquered as far as it was lawful for us. There is nothing I can seek at the risk of Alexander." Oscus said: "It is time for Alexander to leave off where the sun and the earth

[1] I use the text of Kiessling. Leipsic, 1872.

leave off likewise," and endeavoured to describe the sea, "immense and untried by human experience, the bond of all the world and the keeper of its lands, the vastness unruffled by any oar, the shores, now harried by the raging tide, now deserted by its ebb, the horrid darkness, brooding on the waves, and the eternal night oppressing what nature has withdrawn from human eyes." And so many. Then there is a section (headed *Divisio*), on the particular kind of suasion to be used in such speeches, the devices which it is safe and proper for orators to address to kings, with gradations as before. It will readily be perceived from this example what sort of dealing is here on the other stock subjects—the deliberation of the three hundred at Thermopylæ, whether they shall go or not; of Agamemnon, whether he shall sacrifice Iphigenia; of Alexander, whether he shall enter Babylon; of the Athenians, whether on Xerxes' threat of a second invasion they shall remove the Persian war trophies; of Cicero, whether he shall ask mercy of Antony, or burn his Philippics. The quotations are sometimes verse as well as prose, and give us specimens of poets otherwise lost, with an occasional literary anecdote of interest, such as the offence which Asinius Pollio[1] took at the praise given to Cicero in the recitation by a certain poet of Corduba, Sextilius Ena—

"Deflendus Cicero est Latiæque silentia linguæ,"

which Cornelius Severus borrowed, and improved into—

"Conticuit Latiæ tristis facundia linguæ."

This anecdote is interesting in many ways,—first for the protest of Pollio, almost equally piquant whether it proceeded from critical severity, from personal jealousy, or from political feeling; and secondly, for the evidence it gives of the straining for point and rhetorical "hit," in verse and prose alike.

The Preface of the First Book of the *Controversies*—addressed

[1] See *Suas.*, vi. Pollio, a great friend of Antony, was both an orator of high reputation and a very severe critic. It was he, it should be remembered, who found "Patavinity" in Livy; though it has been ingeniously suggested that this was only an *excessive* propriety of speech, such as enabled the old woman to detect Theophrastus as not an Athenian.

to the three sons—gives a rather interesting view of the scheme of these curious compositions, which seems to have been that Seneca the father should brush up his memory of the golden or nearly golden age of Latin Rhetoric which immediately followed Cicero, and illustrate it from more strictly literary sources A good deal in the piece (as is usual in the better class of rhetorical writing) bears directly on our subject. The old rhetorician commends his sons for extending their view beyond their own age, for wanting to know what Roman eloquence there was to set against "insolent Greece"[1]—in short, for endeavouring to take that comparative view of at least one division of literature the want of which (as we have so fully set forth) was the crying sin and yet the inevitable weakness of Greek criticism. He has the usual complaint of luxury withdrawing men from literature, which was doubtless as true, and as little peculiar, then as at all other times. He lets us know that there were none (or no good) *commentarii* of the best declaimers, that he himself had heard them all except Cicero, whom, as far as chronology went, he might have heard,[2] but for the confusions of the state: he points out that the regular declamation was a rather late growth, and extols the character of Porcius Latro, one of its oldest practitioners. The Introduction to the Second Book is much shorter, and principally celebrates the ability of Arellius Fuscus. The Third (for the text of which we only have the Excerpts, not the full articles) has an important preface, which starts from the fact or assertion that Cassius Severus, a great orator on serious occasions, was not a good declaimer, though he had good bodily advantages, a voice at once powerful and sweet, a delivery with all the merits and none of the drawbacks of the stage, and an extraordinary faculty of improvisation. It

The Controversies: *their Introductions.*

[1] *Insolenti Græcia* (*op. cit.*, p. 59). I hope it may be hardly necessary to quote certain lines, "To the memory of my beloved Master, William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us." It is already known to students of Ben Jonson that Ben was soaked in Latin, especially of the silver age: and Professor Schelling of Philadelphia has done good work by indicating sources in his edition of the *Discoveries*. But the vein is not exhausted. Seneca and Quintilian were to Ben almost more than Browne and Fuller were to Lamb.

[2] Seneca was born about 60 B.C., and was thus eighteen at Cicero's death.

seems that Seneca once asked him why these faculties failed him in set *agonismata*, and his answer (whether to the point or not) is of the very first interest, as illustrating that difficult point of the ancient conjunction of oratory and literature, and also as a counterblast to the Plinian idea (*v. infra*) of the polyhistoric *littérateur*. "What great wit," said he, "has ever been good at more than one thing [whereby, let it be observed, he separates declamation from oratory]? Did not Cicero's eloquence fail him in verse? Virgil's genius in prose? We read the orations of Sallust simply as a compliment to the historian: and the oration of that most eloquent man Plato, which is written for Socrates, is worthy neither of counsel nor of client."

All these things invite comment—the last most of all. I put aside, as entirely irrelevant, certain modern dubitations as to the genuineness of the Platonic *Apology*. They rest upon no warranty of scripture, and opinion is simply opinion, to be received politely, and to be "laid on the table." But it is worth dwelling on the point that the *Apology* as we have it, though to all competent judges of literature one of the capital works of antiquity, arch-worthy of Plato, more than arch-worthy of Socrates, might very well seem to a Roman lawyer unworthy of both, and might possibly have so seemed to Aristotle himself For of all recorded *plaidoyers* it is perhaps, in the temper of the jury and the circumstances of the case, the least likely to secure an acquittal, and the most likely to render condemnation inevitable. The other remarks do not matter so much; but it is of weight that a man should seriously put the difference between Declamation and practical Oratory on the same footing as the difference between poetry and prose. It shows how ill-adjusted, as yet, the grasp of literary criticism was, and also how necessary it is to keep an eye on everything that is said about Rhetoric, if we are really to master what was thought about Criticism. The introduction to the Fourth Book, again one of Excerpts only, gives the information that Asinius Pollio (whose works, if we had them, would probably be of the greatest possible value to *us*) disliked declaiming in public, but was, on the rare occasions when he could be heard thus exercising himself, more florid than in his actual orations. We can well

believe it, and it shows that Pollio had the root of the matter in him. In the same way a man with critical sense will allow himself, in a rough draft, flowers which he cuts out in the most ruthless manner before he prints.

The Fifth and Sixth books, which are in the same fragmentary condition, have no introductions at all; but the seventh is in better case. Like the others, it is mainly devoted to the characteristics of a single orator — in this case Silius Albucius. Some of the things said about him touch us nearly, as, for instance, Pollio's—the severe Pollio's—description of his *sentences* (axioms, maxims, apophthegms) as "white"—that is to say, simple, clear, with nothing obscure or unexpected,—but "vocal" and "splendid." It was impossible, continues Seneca, to complain of the poverty of the Latin tongue when you heard him: he was never in the very least in pain for a word. Yet, on the other hand, he was not equal. His language was at one moment magnificent, at another he would mention the most sordid things — "vinegar, and pennyroyal, and lanterns, and pumice, and sponges." He thought "nothing must *not* be named in a declamation [and the reason is valuable or invaluable] because he feared to smack of the Schools." And yet further we get the important *obiter dictum*: "Familiar phrase is, among oratorical virtues, a thing which rarely succeeds." And then there is a very luminous and jocund anecdote of the real trouble into which the devotion to Figures might even then bring men. Albucius had rhetorically proposed to administer certain oaths. His opponent, L. Arruntius, very coolly rose and said, "We accept the condition: he shall swear." Albucius protested that this would do away with Figures altogether. Quoth Arruntius (very sensibly), "Let them go—we can do without them": and the *centumviri* allowed the catch. The unlucky orator was so annoyed that he renounced actual pleading from that day, because of the insult done to his beloved Figures.

The Eighth Book is again without its preface; but though there is a very large lacuna in ix., we have part of the introduction. It yields little. The last is in better case, but still not very fertile, though we have another instance of the mania for Figures. It is said of the above-quoted Oscus: "Dum nihil

non schemate dicere cupit, oratio ejus non figurata erat sed prava." Certainly there are no few examples of this "pravity" in the declamations themselves, which it would be interesting, but in our space impossible, to examine, as we have examined the prefaces.[1]

They, however, also contain examples of that severity of taste which has always distinguished Latin criticism, and of which Pollio is the great example. Messala, as we learn, was *Latini utique sermonis observator diligentissimus*, and he said of Latro (whom Seneca's later taste admired) "*sua* lingua disertus est"—"He is an eloquent man in his own lingo." Seneca himself, however, is by no means tolerant of excessive conceit, and rebukes the class of "sentence" which, he tells us, some charged upon Publilius as inventor. The examples given are in the case of a disinherited son found with poison, which he spills on discovery in the interior of his father's house: and the sentences are, "He washed out his disinheriting with poison, and what he spilt was my death," both being supposed to be spoken by the father. And in another stock case—the curious one which has more than one historical analogue, where the Prætor Flaminius was accused of having had a condemned man's throat cut at dinner, to amuse a courtesan who said she had never seen a man die—the unlucky Murredius is said to have arranged a *tetracolon*—a four-membered antithesis: "The courts are made subservient to the bed-chamber; the prætor to a harlot; the prison to the banquet; day to night"; as to which last Seneca justly asks, "What sense has it?"

On the whole, this very valuable and interesting book, which has been spoken of with surprisingly uncritical contempt by some, and to which I should like to devote much greater space, forms, with Pliny's *Letters* and Quintilian, the great trinity of documents for appreciating directly the state of Latin opinion as to literature, and its causes, in the first century after Christ, while with Cicero and Horace it forms a similar trinity for that in the last century before Christ. And it is needless to say that these two periods were, early *avant-*

[1] It has always to be remembered that they are not integral and complete, but centos of quoted flights, conceits, &c. on the stock hard cases.

coureurs and belated decadents excepted, the flourishing time of classical Latin literature. Of this state and these causes we shall speak generally later

One writer of famous memory who belongs to this period—who indeed was older even than Cicero—has been hitherto unmentioned, because, as a matter of fact, we have practically no literary criticism remaining from him, and that is Varro. I should myself have been disposed to relegate the author of the *De Re Rustica* and the *De Lingua Latina* to the place of his brother (or grandson) grammarians; but this might seem unceremonious in face of the importance of the critical position which Professor Nettleship assigned to him. It is, perhaps, also a convenient place to notice the exact character of that importance. As in so many other cases, if we went by titles only, and by guesswork from them, Varro must certainly have a high rank. "On Poets," "On Poems," "On Characters" (in the technical Greek sense of literary *differentia?*), "On Scenic Action," "Plautine Questions," might seem at first sight likely to be, if we had them, a very El Dorado of Latin criticism. But the few surviving fragments are a little discouraging. That Varro would be fertile in grammatical, mythological, social explanation, we may be quite certain. But the fragments seldom go much farther. The report, quoted by Quintilian, of Ælius Stilo's saying that if the Muses wrote Latin they would write in the language of Plautus, is one of those rather irritating critical catchwords which carry with them the minimum of critical illumination. It is, in fact, only an *ad captandum* fashion of saying that the speaker liked Plautus, or wanted to pay him a compliment at the moment. Most of the others seem (as indeed Mr Nettleship saw) to be merely examples, either of the habits of "placing" authors in this or that rank, of comparing them with this or that other, from which criticism has suffered many things and gained few, or else of the not much less barren classification of kinds.

Varro.

It is on the first point that I wish to make a slight digression. It is evident from the epithets that he uses in regard to them, such as "stupid," "trifling," "vicious," that these processes of

placing and of comparison were not to Mr Nettleship's taste. I shall myself admit that the addiction of Greek, and still more of Latin, criticism to them seems to me to be among the very greatest weaknesses of both. But I must add a distinction which is constantly forgotten, and which I am not sure that Mr Nettleship himself had in mind. The "placing" of A, B, C, and D in order of merit is "stupid" and "trifling" enough; the still further awarding of seventh place to A for Somethingity, and of third to B for Something-elseness, is more stupid and more trivial still. Nor is that comparative criticism, the *locus classicus* of which is perhaps M. Taine's ejaculation, "J'aime mieux Alfred de Musset," as a criticism on Tennyson, any better; in fact, as being not merely sterile and jejune, but illogical and actively misleading, it is considerably worse. But there *is* a placing and there *is* a comparison, which are two very different things —which are, in fact, the two highways of all real literary criticism. The placing is that which sets a man, not in the first division of the first class, or the second of the third, but in his relations to time and country, to language and manner, to predecessors and successors—to the whole literary map in larger or smaller circumference. The comparison is that which does not work out a performer's rank, but disengages his qualities. These are the methods to which all the great critics have perforce resorted, and which have made them great. That there is less of them than there should be in ancient criticism may be true enough; that the want of them (with perhaps a little want also of sympathy with the highest poetry) is what prevents Aristotle from being the greatest critic of all time, is true enough; that the presence of them in Longinus is one of the main secrets of his unmatched quality, is true enough. But they are very different things from the enumeration of Volcatius Sedigitus, and from the *in argumentis Cœcilius in ethesin Terentius in sermonibus Plautus* of Varro.[1]

[1] Varro was happier in the phrase *filo et facetia sermonis* applied to Plautus: and he seems to have been genuinely devoted to the dramatist whose canon he constituted, *v. Noctes Atticæ*, III. iii.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTEMPORARIES OF QUINTILIAN.

PETRONIUS—SENECA THE YOUNGER—THE SATIRISTS—PERSIUS—THE PROLOGUE AND FIRST SATIRE—EXAMINATION OF THIS—JUVENAL—MARTIAL—THE STYLE OF THE EPIGRAMS—PRÉCIS OF THEIR CRITICAL CONTENTS—STATIUS—PLINY THE YOUNGER—CRITICISM IN THE 'LETTERS'—THE 'DIALOGUS DE CLARIS ORATORIBUS'—MR NETTLESHIP'S ESTIMATE OF IT—THE GENERAL LITERARY TASTE OF THE SILVER AGE—"FAULTLESSNESS"—ORNATE OR PLAIN STYLE.

FROM the later years of Augustus, and the earlier of his immediate successors, we have no criticism of importance except Seneca's. But the Neronian time has left us interesting approaches to the subject in the works of Petronius and Seneca the younger, as well as in the poet Persius; while, somewhat later, the satires of Juvenal and the epigrams of Martial are, the former not destitute, the latter full, of literary allusion and opinion. These, with a certain contribution from Pliny's *Letters* and the *Dialogus de Claris Oratoribus* (usually included among the works of Tacitus, but not resembling him in style, and sometimes attributed to Quintilian), must be successively dealt with. Quintilian himself is of too great importance not to deserve a separate chapter.

Petronius.

We can understand, as well from the character usually given of the *Arbiter elegantiarum* as from the style of his curiously dismembered and rather disreputable written work,[1] that questions of literary criticism must have been of the first interest

[1] I use the smaller edition of Bücheler, Berlin, 1862.

to him. If we had the entire *Satires* (supposing that they ever were more entire than *Tristram Shandy* or the *Moyen de Parvenir*), there can be very little doubt that this element would show itself in very large proportion. There must have been suppers less brutally vulgar and Philistine than that of Trimalchio; and literary discussion was as indispensable at a Roman supper of the better class as broiled bones at an English one — while suppers lasted. Even the Circes, if not the Quartillas, of the time were very frequently "blue" in the intervals of more exciting amusements, and Agamemnon, Eumolpus,[1] and others must have frequently spoken in character. As it is, the opening of the fragment as we have it, and a passage farther on, deal directly with the subject.

The opening passage is occupied with that denunciation of bombastic and "precious" language which seems to have been the favourite occupation of the critics of the time. The attack is at first directed against the practice of declamation, which almost inevitably tempted boys and youthful writers to bombast, but it so quickly glides into a general literary censure that it is worth giving in full.

"I believe that the reason why schoolboys and students become such fools is, that they never see or hear of anything to which we are accustomed in the actual world. They are occupied by pirates standing on the beach with chains in their hands, by tyrants ordaining that sons shall cut their fathers' heads off, by oracles against a pestilence to the effect that three or more virgins are to be sacrificed, by little bundles of words smeared with honey, and everything, as it were, powdered with poppy-seed and sesamum. For people bred in this fashion sense is as impossible as a pleasant odour for those who live in the kitchen.[2] If you will excuse my saying so, you rhetoricians were the first to ruin literature. By exciting ridicule of [*or* playing tricks with] your light and empty phrases,[3]

[1] There is a theory that the verses put in the mouth of Eumolpus are parodies of Lucan and Seneca.

[2] Or "good taste is as impossible as good smell to those," &c. I have not hit on any satisfactory English equivalents for *sapere* (with its double sense) and *bene olere*. What is meant, of course, is that the power of distinguishing is lost in the vicious atmosphere.

[3] *Ludibria quædam excitando.*

you weakened and prostrated the whole body of oratory. Youth had not yet been enslaved to declamations when Sophocles and Euripides devised the words in which they were to speak. The private schoolmaster[1] had not spoilt good wits when Pindar and the Nine Lyrists feared to sing in Homeric verse. And not to allege poets only, I certainly find it nowhere said that Plato and Demosthenes betook themselves to this kind of eloquence. Oratory full grown, and, if I may say so, in her maidenhood, is not spotted and swelling [like a toad], but shoots up in natural beauty.

"Of late this windy and extravagant loquacity has shifted from Asia to Athens, and has breathed upon the aspiring minds of youth like a pestilential star, and forthwith true eloquence, its rule corrupted, has been arrested, and put to silence. Tell me, who has since equalled the fame of Thucydides, of Hyperides? Not so much as a lyric of wholesome complexion has appeared, and everything, as if poisoned with the same food, has been unable to last to a natural grey old age. Even painting has made no better end, since the audacity of the Egyptians has cut so great an art down to shorthand."

The rhetorician Agamemnon defends scholastic procedure by the old plan of throwing the blame on parents and the like; but the story quickly turns to one of its more than "picaresque" episodes, and the subject drops.

The other passage[2] begins with equal abruptness, and serves as preface only to a very much longer poetical recitation by Eumolpus, who speaks it. It is chiefly noteworthy for containing the phrase *Curiosa felicitas*, applied to Horace, which perhaps itself gives us as good a notion of Petronius' critical faculty as anything could. But it conveys some sound doctrine. Verse itself seems easy; any boy thinks he can write it as soon as he has learnt the rules, and retired orators (a hit, I suppose, at Cicero) compose it as a relaxation, as if it were easier than their speeches. But it is no such light matter. You must take choice words [we are almost at Dante's "sifted" words], words far

[1] *Umbraticus doctor*, which Ben Jonson Englishes directly as "umbratical doctors" in the *Discoveries*, and De Quincey rather hardily converts to a compliment in his *Essay on Rhetoric*.

[2] § 118. Ed. cit., p. 71.

from the use of the vulgar crowd,[1] and at the same time you must be careful that individual phrases are not too fine for the rest. Nor must you treat your subject—civil war, for instance—in the mere tone of a chronicler, but the "free spirit must be forced through[2] difficulties, and the ministry of the gods, and a fabulous torment of sentences, so that it may rather appear the vaticination of a frenzied mind than a trustworthy and scrupulous document under attestation." Now this advice, though much in it is sound, takes distinctly the other side to that which Encolpius had urged in the overture.

On the whole, we must regret very keenly that we have not more of the Arbiter's remarks on the subject. It is improbable that anything like a coherent theory of criticism on the great scale would have emerged, and very likely that (as in the two extant examples just quoted) we should rather have had ingenious centos of opposing views. But all would have been originally and brightly put, and it is by no means impossible that what we now chiefly desiderate — *aperçus* of particular authors, books, or passages, done with grasp and insight—would have been forthcoming. As it is, we have but what we have.

Seneca the Younger.

Nero's other victim, the curious compound between Polonius and Mr Pecksniff (with, it must be owned, some merits which belonged to neither), whose name was L. Annæus Seneca, has left us a great deal more work than Petronius, and was certainly a man of letters. He was even a considerable man of letters, and if he wrote the *Tragedies*, a very considerable man of letters indeed.[3] He had, moreover, though

[1] *Refugiendum est ab omni verborum ut ita dicam vilitate, et sumendæ voces a plebe summotæ.*

[2] *Præcipitandus est liber spiritus.* A characteristic Petronian phrase which will serve (and has in part been used) as text for very different sermons. Part of what follows is no doubt intentionally obscure. The *ambages deorumque ministeria* refer, of course, to the stock revolutions and interventions of Epic as of Tragedy. But *fabulosum sententiarum tormentum* is not such plain sailing. I *think* it means (with an intentional side-glance at the fabled torments which the heroes of Epic see in Hades) the process of racking the brain for story-ornament and sententious conceit of phrase.

[3] *Works*, 3 vols., ed. Haase, Leipsic, 1886-87. This does not contain the *Tragedies*, as to which, however, I have never wished to go beyond a nearly forty years' possession, the pretty little "Regent's Classics" edition of 1823. But I have never, as a critic, been able to believe that Seneca wrote them.

scarcely a good, a distinct and by no means commonplace style, and while Quintilian attacks him *nominatim* in a passage which will occupy us later, it is by no means improbable that Petronius (who must have known him well, and was probably bored by him) had Seneca himself in his mind when he talked of the *ventosa et enormis loquacitas.*

Seneca, however, was by profession a Stoic, and these classical Pharisees, though their sect was not exactly unliterary, pushed to an extreme the partly superfine, partly puritanic, contempt with which, as we have seen, the philosophy of antiquity generally chose to regard the minutiæ of literary criticism and literary craft. The "wise man of the Stoics" might be a perfect man of letters, as he was a perfect everything else; but it was entirely beneath him to take seriously such things as metre, or style, or the pleasure of literary art. In the Tenth Dialogue, *de Brevitate Vitæ*,[1] after the philosopher has been talking in his high-sniffing way of collecting brasses, singing, giving long and *recherché* dinners (but not, so far as I remember, of putting out money at usury), he begins a new chapter with things to be treated more contemptuously still.

"'Twould be long," he says, "to track them all out—those whose life draughts, or ball-playing, or the practice of carefully cooking their flesh in the sun, has caused to waste away. They are not exactly lazy people, since their pleasures give them a great deal of trouble. For nobody can doubt that they make much ado about nothing, who are detained by the study of useless letters—there is a considerable company of them among us Romans. It has been a mania of the Greeks to inquire how many rowers Ulysses had, whether the *Iliad* was written earlier than the *Odyssey*, further, whether the two are by the same author, and other matters of the same stamp, which, if you keep to yourself, they will not help your silent

[1] Ed. cit., i. 209. If Seneca be suspected of possible insincerity, Marcus Aurelius cannot be. Yet the estimable Emperor, who had earlier (i. 7), in the true Pharisaic spirit, congratulated himself on abstaining from "rhetoric and poetry," concludes his reference to the drama (xi. 6) (a reference interesting as including one of the explanations of *κάθαρσις*), by asking, "To what end does the whole plan of poetry and drama look?" As for Epictetus, *v. supra*, p. 62

conscience, while, if you talk about them, you will seem not more learned but only more of a bore."

The rest of the chapter draws up a long list of similar enormities of curiosity—historical and literary. "Who had the first naval triumph?" &c. Seneca even ironically supplies questions of the kind, and information about them, to those who like such things. Elsewhere in the 88th (the third of the thirteenth book)[1] of those not disagreeable epistles which he composed for the edification of a man of straw called Lucilius, and for the display of his own ability, he supposes the definite question to be put to him, "What do you think of liberal studies?" and he goes off at score in the true style of the Stoic pulpit. He respects none, counts none as good. They are all very well as exercises, as preparations; you may stick to them as long as you can do nothing better. They are called "liberal," as worthy of a free man: but there is only one study worthy of a freeman (does one not hear the very drone of the ancestor of Mr Chadband?), and that is the study of WISDOM. All else is petty and puerile: it has nothing to do with making a GOOD man. Will the grammarian, who, if he does not stick to mere philology, goes to history or, at farthest, to poetry, be a road-maker for us to VIRTUE, my brethren? Will syntax and prosody banish fear, quench cupidity, bridle lust? And so forth. He makes, indeed, not bad fun of the attempts to make out Homer now a Stoic, now an Epicurean, now a Peripatetic. But he soon relapses into the "chaff and draff" of the conventional moralists at all times. What are the tempests that impelled Ulysses to the storms of the mind? What does it matter whether Penelope was chaste? Teach me what Chastity *is*. *Et patati et patata.* From a man in this frame of mind comes no good critical thing; though we certainly should like to have heard from the Tragedian, whoever he was, what put into his head the idea of that remarkable compromise between Classic and Romantic Tragedy which gave us the Latin *Hippolytus* and the *Octavia*.

The three satiric poets give us both directly and indirectly a great deal of matter; in fact, they may almost be said to pro-

[1] Ed. cit., iii. 246 *sq.*

vide the illustrative commentary to their contemporary and friend[1] Quintilian's precepts. It is possible that the example of Horace may have had something to do with this; but such an example need not have been required. As we know, not merely from themselves, the first century at Rome, if not one of the very greatest times of literary production, was one of very great and very widespread literary interest. As Persius tells us—

The satirists.

> "Ecce inter pocula quærunt
> Romulidæ saturi, quid dia poemata narrent;"

while Seneca's remarks, take them with what grains of salt we will, are sound corroborative evidence. Further, it appears on all hands, not merely that there was a distinct fashion of literature, but that this fashion had its own distinct characteristics, that it was one of the times of ornate as opposed to plain style in verse and prose alike, a time of "preciousness," of "raising the language to a higher power," a time when men openly called Cicero a commonplace and obvious writer, and, if they did not fail to pay a kind of conventional reverence to Virgil, wrote in a way as far as possible from being Virgilian. This always gives plenty of handles to the poetical satirist, and, as we shall see, all the three availed themselves of these handles to the full.

The scanty and notable work of Persius—work which, in the junction of these two qualities, has hardly a parallel in literary history, except that of Collins in English—is soaked in criticism of literature as well as of life. The poet's turbid rush of thought and style, forcing its way through self-created obstacles but still forcing it, thick with suspended matter, but all the richer therefor, allows him not merely to deal directly with this subject, but in dealing with others to make constant allusion and by-blow. The famous scazontic prologue, with its affected language, satirising affectation, and its conceits, giving an object-lesson of conceited style, is all literary except the moral, *quoad*

Persius.

The Prologue and First Satire.

[1] In two cases at least. And Quintilian might have known Persius, as he was in Rome before 59 A.D., while Persius did not die till 62.

"Master Gaster, first Master of Arts," as Rabelais refashioned it fifteen hundred years later. The "horsy fountain" and the sleep on "two-headed" Parnassus, the relinquishment of the Muses to those whom such ladies concern, and the final fling about the crow-poets and poetess-magpies, may be gibes at dabblers in literature: but they show that the giber is steeped in literature himself, and has taken a critical as well as a delighted bath therein. And the first satire (the longest but one) is wholly and directly devoted to the subject. With the old device of a cool objecting friend, Persius takes occasion, while declaring (also an old trick) his own honest desire to keep to better matters, to draw a lively picture of the professional poet, or declamation-writer, scribbling in his locked study, arraying himself in his best clothes, and even with such jewelry as he can muster, carefully gargling his throat, and then tickling the ears of his audience, and comforting himself, when anybody objects the worthlessness of such applause, by the plea—

"At pulchrum digito monstrari et dicier 'Hic est!'"[1]

A still livelier picture follows of the symposium referred to in the lines above quoted as to *Romulidæ saturi;* of the literary dandy in hyacinthine garment mincing and twanging through his nose some morbid stuff (*rancidulum quiddam*) about Phyllis and Hypsipyle, and being cheered in a fashion fit to make the poet's ashes happy, his slab lie lighter on his tomb, and violets spring therefrom.

Then he draws in his horns a little. Verse, of course, is not necessarily bad because it is popular only. But *Euge!* and *Belle!* are not the be-all and end-all of literature. What wretched stuff has not received them? How often have they not been consideration for a good dinner, and a cloak just a little torn! And what is even genuine popular judgment worth? Why do not poets adopt honest Roman subjects,

[1] Not a few other phrases, such as—

"Cum carmina lumbum
Intrant, et tremulo scalpuntur ubi intima versu"—

show what a formidable, and what an acute and capable, reviewer, of the slashing order, Persius would have made.

instead of chattering about unreal Hellenics? And why do they affect such antiquated and unnatural style? What is the good of borrowing such stuff as

"Ærumnis cor luctificabile fulta,"

of ranging everything *in doctis figuris*, and of writing passages, such as two famous ones which he quotes, and which are traditionally asserted to be the work of Nero himself. He exhausts his images of scorn on these unlucky lines, and holds up *Arma virum* against them as an example of natural knotty strength against effeminate drivel. And to a fresh protest of his friends about the danger of this kind of criticism, he replies by an ironical consent to declare it all very good, and a *coda* of regret for the time when Lucilius used what freedom of speech he chose, when Horace laughed at everybody without giving offence, more seriously declaring that, whether he can publish or not, he will *write* as the giants of the Old Comedy wrote.

In this lively crabbed production there are two distinct strains or bents to note. All the best critics have for some time admitted that in professed satire generally, and in Roman satire more than in any other, there is, if not a touch of cant, at any rate a distinct convention of moral indignation—a sort of stock-part of bluff, honestly old-fashioned, censuring of modern corruption—which the satirist takes up as a matter of business. Even Martial, upon whom, Heaven knows! it sits oddly enough, though his consummate dexterity carries it off not ill, affects this now and then; it sometimes suggests itself even through the gloomy intensity of Juvenal; and though such a line as Persius' famous

"Virtutem videant intabescantque relicta"

carries us far out of the dissenting-pulpiteer region where Seneca too often gesticulates, there is in this First Satire, at any rate, some suspicion of forced wrath, of the righteous overmuch.

But the other strand in the twist, the other glance of the view, is in a very different state. There is nothing unreal, to

all appearance, in the poet's condemnation of the preciousness and conceit of poetic and prose style in his day. *Examination of this.* That his own is very far from simple or Attic does not matter; the satire had a prescriptive right to be crabbed, archaic, irregular, bizarre. Whether political dislike of the tyrant did not sharpen literary objection to the poetaster (if the lines really are Nero's) may be a debatable question for those who care to debate it; but, in any case, the objection was there, and seems to have been quite genuine. Now, as has been often pointed out, these definite passages, definitely objected to or praised, are precisely what we want most, and have least of, in ancient criticism. A short examination of them, therefore, will serve our turn very well.

The first passage appears to be cited chiefly as an objectionable example of archaism. We shall see that Quintilian (perhaps in obedience to this very passage, for he knew his Persius, and admired him) repeats the objection to the word *ærumna*[1]—to us a word not in the least objectionable, but the contrary. And if it be said that foreigners, and especially foreigners who acknowledge themselves entirely uncertain about the probable pronunciation of Latin, have no business to give an opinion about the euphony of words, the retort is obvious and pretty triumphant. To *some* Romans, at any rate, if not to Persius and Quintilian, the word must have sounded agreeable, or as poets they would not have used, and as hearers or readers would not have applauded, it. The conceit of "cor *fulta* ærumnis"—with heart stretched on pillows of woes—was no doubt another crime, and it is not improbable that *luctificabile* was a third. The Romans had a rather pedantic horror of long words, which is again formulated by Quintilian, just as it is implied and exemplified here.

Of the same type and colour is the objection to *rasa antitheta* and *doctæ figuræ* which follows, as well as that to the vowel

[1] It has been questioned whether Persius did object to *ærumna*, or to any of these words, *as words*. I should say that the coincidence in Quintilian settles the first point: even if the context did not, to my thinking, settle it, with the others. But he *may* have been thinking merely or mainly of the confusion of tragic and epic style

harmony, the soft cadence, the mouth-watering[1] tenderness of the Neronian fragments. We may, without rashness, point to the soft sound of "Berecynthius Attin," the alliteration of "*di*rimebat" and "*Del*phin" with the internal half-rhyme of "*cæ*ruleum" and "*Ne*rea," the leonine effect of "longe" and "Apennino" and the two tetrasyllables, with the sudden pull up of the spondaic ending, as what irritated Persius. This same accompaniment of sound, and cunning contrast or echo of vowels, recurs in the second and more coherent extract: "*Tor*va *cor*nua"; "Mimal*lon*eis *bom*bis," "*rap*tum *ca*put"; "vitulo superbo"; "*lyn*cem *cory*mbis"; the long words "reparabilis" and "Mimalloneis," with the foreign effect of the latter and others. These, no doubt, were the things which annoyed our poet here.

A little reflection will make this annoyance exceedingly interesting. Not merely is the general effect of these lines very similar to that of hundreds and thousands of lines, in the earlier English Romantic school from Marlowe to Chamberlayne, in the later from Keats to Mr Swinburne; but the indignation of Persius is exactly similar, if not to the almost incredulous and disgusted disdain with which the critics and poets of the "school of good sense" looked back on the vagaries of their predecessors, to the alarmed and furious attempt made by critics of the present century to extinguish contemporaries who indulged in such things. Persius on Nero, if Nero it was, no doubt gave hints to, and, with hardly less doubt, was himself quite in sympathy with, the *Quarterly* Reviewers of Keats and Tennyson. There is the same protest against the effeminate, the luscious, the unrestrained, the same indignant demand for manliness, order, sanity.

But we may go even further. These same processes, which we have ventured to point out as certainly illustrated by the gibbeted verses, and as probably accounting for the wrath of their executioner, are the very processes by which all our great nineteenth-century poets in English have produced their characteristic effects — alliteration, internal rhyme or assonance,

[1] *Tenerum et laxa cervice legendum . . . delumbe . . . natat in labris . . . in udo est.*

complete or muffled, and, above all, the modulation of vowel and consonant so as to produce a sort of song without music, accompanying the actual words. And it may be noted that while some of our modern critics have objected to these things in themselves, many more, oddly enough, object to the process of pointing them out, and seem to think that there is something almost indecent in it.

It would be unreasonable to expect that in the narrow compass of some six hundred lines this passage—*locus uberrimus fructuosissimusque*, to borrow the Ciceronian superlatives—should repeat itself. But the literary interest of Persius, as regards criticism, is by no means exhausted. The next three satires are indeed wholly occupied by the exposition of that practical, honest, upright, rather hard, rather limited morality which it is the pride of Rome to have carried as far as mere morality of the sort can travel. But the beginnings of the fifth[1] and sixth[2] have a literary and critical turn in them, and though the course of the satire is afterwards deflected, these beginnings show the same man, the same tastes, the same standards that we have seen in the first. Don't potter over fantastic subjects and sham Greek epics, but attack something Roman and serious. Whatever you write, write it in a manly fashion, with no æsthetic trifling. That is the critical gospel of Persius, and he sets it forth with a vigour which we shall seldom find equalled, and with (in the instance we have dwelt upon) a most fortunate fertility of illustration.

Juvenal.

The far bulkier work of Juvenal—work also of far higher genius in parts, but more unequal and uncertain—contains less that concerns our subject. It is impossible to mistake in Persius, young as he died, and scanty as are his remains, a very direct interest in literary form, such as did not always or often accompany Stoic philosophy. Juvenal, with a less definite philosophical creed, and perhaps a rather lower moral standard, had a higher "Pisgah-sight" and a stronger grasp of life as a whole. However long Persius had lived, it is improbable that he would ever have given us any-

[1] *Vatibus hic mos est*, κ.τ.λ.

[2] With its compliment to Cæsius Bassus and his *marem strepitum fidis Latinæ*.

thing equal to the magnificent Tenth Satire. But Juvenal, much more of a pessimist than Persius, was less capable of enthusiasm. His general critical standpoint does not seem to have been very different from that of his predecessor, or indeed (allowing for the vastly greater difference of temperament) from that which we shall find in Martial. But to Juvenal literature as literature had no special pre-eminence among the contents of his famous *farrago*. It would even appear that, although practising it greatly himself, he had a rather special contempt for it.[1] The well-known opening of the First Satire[2] agrees with Persius and with Martial in its scorn of artificial Greek epics, of sham heroic subjects and forms generally. But there pierces through it something of a special contempt for "Grub Street"—for the unlucky "Codrus"—who reappears, not always to be abused, but always to be dismissed with a sort of kick of contempt. There is something more than the stock supercilliousness of the satirist in the thousand times quoted

> "Stulta est clementia, cum tot ubique
> Vatibus occurras, perituræ parcere chartæ."

The same tone is maintained throughout, and when poetry and literature appear (which is not extremely often), poets and men of letters are treated as practitioners of a rather troublesome, nearly superfluous, and slightly disreputable, profession, not as bad or good artists as the case may be. The stage-fright of the rhetorician who is going to make a speech at Lyons (the gird at the provincial is obvious), the book-chest of Codrus, with the mice gnawing the divine poems, the Greek mania which alternates with others in wives, and the learned lady who talks for hours on the comparative merits of Homer and Virgil, are introduced with the poet's usual spirit and vigour, but very distinctly *not* from the literary point of view. They are ludicrous things and persons, good satiric matter: but the book-chest is in the same class with the *lectus Procula minor*, the fancy for Greek with the fancy for gladiators, the critical lady with her

[1] It has been held that Juvenal shows his "freedman" extraction by aping and overdoing patrician prejudice in this and other matters. But I had rather not think this.

[2] *Semper ego auditor tantum, &c.*

sister who enamels her face. It is by no means un-noteworthy that, in the Tenth itself, the vanity of literary study and success —an admirably suggestive subject—is hardly touched at all; that the careers of Demosthenes and Cicero are held up as a moral because of their political ill-success, and the sanguinary fate of each—which might have happened to the most illiterate of men. But this is most noticeable of all in the Seventh, which may be said to have a definitely literary frame and scheme, or which at least certainly would have had these in the hands of a man really inclined to literary criticism. It opens with a characteristic picture of what the Americans would call a "slump" in poetry—the most celebrated bards giving up the profession in sheer despair, becoming bath-keepers, or stokers, or auctioneers' criers, selling their tragedies at rummage sales, or at the very best getting empty praise and no pudding from their stingy though wealthy patrons. Then Juvenal becomes a little graver, and contrasts the victim of *cacoethes scribendi* with the really exceptional poet (whom he cannot point out, and only imagines), who will put forth no hack-work, and writes not even for fame, but to please himself and the Muses. Such a poet must be in independent circumstances—if Virgil had had no boy to wait on him, and no tolerable lodging, all the snakes would have dropped from the hair of his Erinyes, says he in one of his most characteristic Juvenalisms. Lucan happened to be well off: but Statius, for all the popularity of his *Thebais*, would have gone dinnerless if he had not sold his *Agave* to the actor Paris (apparently to pass off as his own).[1] Nor is the historian's labour more profitable. Indeed it is less so, for it consumes more paper, more time, and more oil for the lamp, as Juvenal points out in what some modern reviewers would call "his flippant manner." Even the much-praised trade of the orator brings in wretched fees as a rule—a ham, a jar of sardines, a bunch of onions, half-a-dozen of common wine. If you wish to soar higher in the matter of receipts, you must

[1] I think *intactam* insinuates this. But it may only mean that the play was produced "for the first time on any stage," though this seems feebler. Some would have it that Paris, as being a pantomime, was to travesty the thing.

spend greatly, have handsome horses, furniture, rings. Merely teaching to declaim may be rather more profitable, but think of the intolerable boredom of the business! the same patter of stock declamations and exercises, the unreality and folly of it all! True, there are exceptions—and here comes a curious passage, half satirical, half complimentary, on Quintilian himself, but treating him not in the least from the literary standpoint. And so to the end.

This abstract, though brief, should be sufficient to establish our point—that Juvenal, while he rarely cared to touch strictly literary subjects, hardly ever treated them in a strictly literary manner. He shared the opinion of the best Roman literary judges at all times—and especially in his own times, when the popular current was setting in the opposite direction—that literary style ought to be plain, nervous, manly; and he could express this with even better right than Persius, inasmuch as his own, though extremely allusive and of the most original character, is quite clear from involution or conceit. But he did not care in the least to investigate literary processes: nor did he trouble himself very much to contrast styles and differentiate their values. One may even, without any rashness of guess, be certain that he would have regarded criticism of form with nearly as much disfavour in a man as he expressly does in a woman. In fact, he would have considered it the occupation of a fribble.

Martial.

When we pass to the graceful graceless crowd of motes, or rather midges (for they have a very distinct bite), which composes the works of Martial, we find, as has been said, very much the same general attitude towards styles in literature. But the expression is differentiated, not merely by the existence in the writer of a different moral complexion, but by the necessary conditions of his form. *They* could discuss; *he* can only glance. Further, the avowed purpose of amusement, of composing the verses of a very peculiar society, which animates the epigrams practically throughout, affects the result very considerably. Their author resembles both Persius and Juvenal in paying very elaborate attention to the outside of things, to the accidents of the literary business.

We hear in him continually the echo of the *sophos*, the "bravo!" which the reciter and the rhetorician sought for, and which they sometimes, if not often, procured by the agency of a regular *claque*. We learn (not in the least to our surprise) that then, as now, there existed the kind literary friend who was quite eager to receive presentation copies, but who was by no means ready to go to the publishers and exchange even an extremely moderate number of his own denarii for a nice clean book, on polished vellum and neatly rubricated.[1] There were also then, as now, readers or reviewers who would take copyists' (*lege* "printers'") errors very seriously, and upbraid the poet for them[2]—which he did not bear patiently.

Here we have the certainly pointed, if not very polite, excuse for not submitting to the same tax of presentation copies, that he fears his friend may reply with a present of *his* works:[3] elsewhere (in those triumphs of ingenious trifling the *apophoreta* or gift-tickets) the neat suggestion, with a blank album, that a poet can offer no more acceptable present than paper *not* written upon.[4] In one place there is, to carry off a piece of sheer begging, an irresistibly comic anecdote of a "curious impertinent," who after asking whether the poet is not the Martial whom everybody not a fool admires, and receiving a confession of the soft impeachment, abruptly demands why such a poet has such a shocking bad great-coat, and receives the meek reply, *quia sum malus poeta*.[5] But these, and a good many others, which an easy reading, and a not very troublesome classification, of the *Epigrams* will enable any one to produce, are examples parallel rather to our citations from Juvenal than to the capital one from Persius. That is to say, they are examples rather of the selection of a particular subject, as one of a hundred suitable to the special mode of treatment, than of the assertion or the display of any particular interest in that subject, or any special theories upon it. So, too, in some cases of more special reference, Martial's habits of flattery, and the unblushing way in which (not for the first or the last time) men of letters in his generation were wont to fish for presents, make it not always quite easy to know how much seriousness

[1] i. 117. [2] ii. 8. [3] vii. 3. [4] xiv. 10. [5] vi. 82.

to attach to his expressions of opinion on particular writers. Did he, for instance, really think Silius Italicus such a great poet?[1] One cannot say: it is certain that Silius was rich, and a person who seems to have been able to keep his head above water, and on his shoulders, during all the stormy changes of his lifetime. And if such a man wrote poetry, if he was not his enemy—still more if, as was the case here, he was his friend—we know but too well that Marcus Valerius Martialis was never likely to *publish* any unflattering opinion of it.

But, in a very large number of cases, there was no possibility of hoodwinking, nor any object in attempting the operation. In the very numerous references to his own books, Martial shows us that he wrote, not at haphazard but with the keenest critical knowledge of the requirements of the form. That he recognises, in more places than one,[2] Catullus as his own master, model, and superior, is itself a critical document and testimonial of the first value. For it is notorious that the Romans, as a rule, by no means rated the great poet of Verona at his due; and though the sneer of Horace[3] may have been dictated by a sufficiently ignoble but very intelligible jealousy, the slight and passing note of Quintilian[4] admits of no such explanation. But it was the Catullus of the epigrams that Martial endeavoured to rival. In doing so he shows that he had a very definite, and a very just, notion of the versification and diction necessary to his purpose. His praise of the *Romana simplicitas* shown in the style of the lampoon of Augustus on Fulvia, in respect to which one can only refer modern readers to the original,[5] is capable of being mistaken for a mere laudation of coarse language—for an anticipation of that curious fallacy which has more than once made men regret the withdrawal of the licence to "talk greasily." But this is unfair both to the poet and to the Emperor. Martial certainly does talk greasily with a vengeance; but the last line of this Imperial fescenninity depends for its point by no means merely on the obscene, and is an excellent example of clear-cut, straight-hitting phrase.

The style of the Epigrams.

[1] iv. 14; vii. 63. [2] *E.g.*, x. 78. [3] *V. supra*, p. 229.
[4] *V. infra*, p. 311. [5] xi. 20.

This phrase Martial himself almost always achieved, though in a few cases his points are still dark to us, and though he had not the slightest objection to using Greek words, vulgar words, and so forth when it suited his purpose. The misty magniloquence which attracted so many men of his time had no charms for him. When he rises, as he sometimes does, from sheer naughtiness or playful trifling to pathos, to seriousness, to graceful description of landscape—in the well-known Pætus and Arria piece, in the epitaphs on Erotion, and the still finer one on Paris, in his country poems and elsewhere—he is purely Attic. No style can have a simpler and a less affectedly simple grace. And that he did this deliberately—that it was his theory as well as his practice—we may see very well from a sort of cento of passages bearing on the subject. He differs not merely from Catullus but from Prior (who is perhaps his nearest analogue in almost all ways) by having obviously no velleities towards the grand style. We can imagine Prior writing, and writing quite as well, the piece which tells how pretty Phyllis, when her lover was racking his brains for some elegant present to reward her kindness past, exerted fresh coaxing before asking him for—a jar of wine,[1] or describing the singular history of Galla on the stock- and share-lists of Love[2] But we cannot imagine Martial writing *Alma* or *Solomon*. And all his critical observations, direct or indirect, testify to a conception of literature perfectly clear and not really deserving the term narrow, if only because the poet quite frankly limits it to the kind in which he wishes to, and knows that he can, excel, the kind indicated in his own famous quatrain:—

> "Ille ego sum nulli nugarum laude secundus
> Quem non ignoras, sed puto lector amas:
> Majores mihi soli sonent, mihi parva locuto
> Sufficit in vestras sæpe redire manus"

Let us see what morsels of criticism such handling furnishes.

The prose preface and the opening epigrams of the first book contain humorous statements of his own fame, excuses (not quite valid) for his licence of speech, and jocose exaggerations of the

[1] xii. 65. [2] x. 75.

critical temper of the times; but there is not much doctrine in them. There is more in ii. 77, where, not in the best temper (for Martial, like some other persons, though he loved to criticise, was not excessively fond of being criticised), he points out to a certain Cusconius what the French wit afterwards borrowed from him in the phrase "ce n'est pas long, mais il y a des longueurs." Verses, he says, like his own, though there may be many of them, are not long because they can spare nothing, because there is nothing otiose in them. Cusconius, on the other hand, can write distichs which are long. There is a not uninteresting glance at the fashionable literary subjects and kinds—History of the times of Claudius, criticism of the myths about Nero (these could be safely done under the Flavian emperors), fables in the style of Phædrus, tender elegiacs and stern hexameters, Sophoclean tragedy or Attic salt—in iii. 20. Another French jest—one of the very best of Piron on La Chaussée—is anticipated with variation in the 25th of the same book, by the suggestion to a friend whose baths have been overheated, that he should ask Sabinæus the rhetor to bathe. *He* can reduce the temperature of the Thermæ of Nero themselves. IV. 49 gives us another critical laudation of the epigram. Flaccus is quite wrong to think it child's play. The poet is much more guilty of that who busies himself with Tereus and Thyestes and Dædalus and Polyphemus. There is no mere bombast in *his* book: *his* Muse is not frounced with senseless tragic train.[1] "But," says Flaccus, "the others are the things that people praise." "Perhaps," says Martial, "they praise *them:* but they read *me*," with of course the implied and very sound criticism that it is not so easy to write what shall be easy to read. V. 10 ends with a jest, the poet saying that if his fame is to come after his death he hopes it will come late. But it treats rather seriously the other "touch of nature" (opposite to that of which Shakespeare speaks and complementary to it), that in literature, and at times [not always, O Martial!] men do *not* "praise new-born gauds." They read Ennius in the lifetime of Virgil, laughed at Homer [the evidence for this?] in his own days, preferred

Précis of their critical contents.

[1] *Insano syrmate tumet.*

Philemon to Menander, and left Ovid to the appreciation of Corinna.[1] But he shows his less critical mood in setting this down to envy rather than to the undoubted fact that, in at least many cases, poets anticipate, if they do not exactly create, the taste for them—that, as it has been said, a poet's chief admirers are born at about the time when he writes. The necessity of some "bite"[2] in epigrams, vii. 25, is counsel at least as much of common-sense as of literature. In the 85th of the same, the poet objects to Sabellus that he can write a few quatrains rather well, but not a book—by which he probably glances at the necessity, in a book, of varying and sorting the kinds, as well as of providing a mere quantity of monotonous stuff. And in the 90th again of the same book he is still more explicitly argumentative. A certain Matho, it seems, went about saying that Martial's books were unequal. If this be so, retorts our bard, it is because Calvinus (? or Cluvienus, as in Juvenal) and Umber write "equal" verses, and a bad book is always an "equal" one.

Now, what exactly did he mean by "equal"? When we say that a book is unequal, we generally mean that it has faults as well as beauties, that it is not equally good, and in this sense Martial would merely be vindicating himself from the charge of a tame faultlessness, from that *æqualis mediocritas* which Quintilian smites in passing. But, if we take it in conjunction with the Sabellus epigram just quoted, I think it will not be unfair to allow to *æqualis* also its other sense of "unvarying," "monotonous," and give the prominence to this in the equivalence with *malus* of the last line.[3] Martial specially and critically prided himself on the variety of his books, on their containing something for every taste, and something (almost) about every subject. And the book, he says therefore, that has not this quality is a bad book. The same doctrine pierces through the laudation of the prose preface of the Eighth to Domitian, and points the hope that the celestial *verecundia*

[1] Another and severer side of the same epigram is that, viii. 69, to Vacerra, who only praises dead poets. To die in order to please Vacerra, says the bard, is not quite *tanti*.

[2] *Sapit quæ novit pungere.*

[3] There is yet another sense of *æqualis*, "like something else," which might be brought in.

of the "bald Nero" will not be offended by the naughtier epigrams.

The third of this eighth book contains an interesting dialogue between the Poet and his Muse. Were it not, says he, better to stop? Are not six or seven books enough and too much? Their fame is far and widely spread, and when the monuments of the great are dust they will be, and strangers will take them to their own country. It is never quite easy to know whether Martial is laughing in his sleeve or not in these boastings. But the ninth of the sisters, her hair and garments dripping with perfume (probably Thalia, certainly not one of the *Musæ severiores*), upbraids him with ingratitude and folly. Why drop these pleasantries? What better pastime will he find? Will he change his sock for the buskin, or arrange hexameters to tell of wars, that pedants may spout him, and that good boys and fair girls may loathe his name? Let the grave and precise write such things by their midnight lamp. But for him, let an elegant saltness dash his Roman books, let real living people recognise and read their own actions and characters; and if the oat be thin, remember that it conquers the trumpets of many. The Epigram here, it will be seen, arrogates to itself something like the place of the full Satire.

This, one of the best and most spirited of Martial's literary pronouncements, is followed up in a lower key by the 56th epigram of the same book, addressed to that Flaccus who is elsewhere the recipient of the poet's literary confidences. It contains the famous line—

"Sint[1] Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones"—

and elaborates the doctrine that the patron makes the poet comfort, if not luxury, the poetry, in an ingenious but impudent manner, carrying off the impudence, however, by the close. What, he supposes Flaccus to say, will you be a Virgil if I give you what Mæcenas gave him? Well, no, perhaps: but I may be a Marsus—a poet who wrote many things, but chiefly

[1] Some MSS. and edd. read *sunt:* but *sint* is so clearly required that this seems mere perversity.

in the occasional kind, whom Martial greatly admired, and whose epilogue on Tibullus—

"Te quoque, Virgilio comitem non æqua Tibulle"—

with two or three other fragments, we possess.[1] And the same doctrine, that love and luxury are needful to the bard, reappears in 73.

Martial does not often come down to the minutiæ of criticism, but he sometimes does, and once in a very noteworthy passage, ix. 11. Here, in some of his most gracefully fluttering verses, he celebrates the charm of the name[2] Eiarinos or Earinos, notes that unless he takes the epic licence of the first form it will not come into verse, and then adds—

"Dicunt Eiarinon tamen poetæ,
Sed Græci, quibus est nihil negatum
Et quos Ἄρες ἄρες decet sonare:
Nobis non licet esse tam disertis,
Qui Musas colimus severiores."

There are two things noticeable here—first, Martial's truly poetical sensitiveness to the beauty of a name, for certainly there is none prettier than Earine (let him keep the masculine to himself!) which also appears elsewhere; and secondly his equally poetical yearning for that licence of "common" quantification, which has made Greek and English the two great poetical languages of the world.[3] If he would have developed these views a little oftener, and at a little greater length, we really could have spared a considerable number of epigrams imputing unmentionable offences to the persons he did not like. It was his cue, however, to profess (though half his charm comes from his sense of them) disdain for such niceties, as in the 81st epigram of the same book, which is one of his neatest

[1] Baehrens, *Poet. Lat. Min.*, vi. 346-348.

[2] *Nomen cum violis rosisque natum.* Wherefore Ben Jonson took it for the heroine of his most beautiful thing, *The Sad Shepherd.*

[3] My friend Professor Hardie rather demurs to the idea of "common" syllables being commoner in Greek than in Latin, save possibly in proper names. But I had certainly thought they were, and, even if we allow for some poetic and humorous exaggeration in *nihil negatum*, it seems to show that Martial thought so too.

turns. Readers, he says, and hearers like his books, but a certain poet denies that they are correctly finished (*exactos*). It does not trouble him much, for he would rather that the courses of the feast he offers pleased the gŭests than that they pleased the cooks. In this, light as it is, there lurks the germ of a weighty criticism, and one which would, had it been worked out, have carried Martial far from the ordinary critical standpoint of his time. That, in homely phrase analogous to his own, the proof of the pudding is in the eating—that the production of the poetical satisfaction afterwards, not the satisfaction of the examiners beforehand as to the observation of the rules, is the thing—that Martial doubtless saw, and that he, by implication, says. But he does not say it quite openly, and it might have shocked Quintilian (though it would not have shocked Longinus) if he had.

The Tenth book is particularly rich in literary epigrams. It opens with a batch of them,—one of his pleasant excuses for yet another reappearance (the pieces are so short that if you don't like the book you can lay it down as finished at any moment), an honest indication of the fact that some of the epigrams are only new editions, so to speak, of old ones, smoothed with a recent file, one of the not disagreeably boasting reminders that letters outlive brass and marble (a boast justified in his own case, but not so, alas! in those of Marsus and others whom he admitted as his masters), a strongly worded protest against some clandestine poet who has been forging bad epigrams in his name, a repetition of the old contemptuous pooh-poohing of stock Greek subjects, and the old exhortation to study the life. The 19th, in a pleasant *envoy* of the book to Pliny, bids the Muse who carries it observe her time, and not disturb the grave man at his graver hours. The 21st is an expostulation with a certain Sextus, who seems to have prided himself on the eccentric vocabulary of his poems. What is the use of writing so that Modestus and Claranus themselves (known men of learning) can scarcely understand you, and so that your books demand not an ordinary reader but the Delphic Apollo? You would prefer to Virgil Cinna—Helvius Cinna, whose fancy for out-of-the-way

words we can see, even in the petty wreckage of his work that time has fated to us.[1] Perhaps, Martial admits, such poems may be praised; but he would rather have grammarians like his work, and not be necessary to its liking.[2] The 35th is a specially graceful compliment to the poetess Sulpicia, who wrote her love poems (apparently rather warm ones[3]) to her husband only, and with whom, says Martial, for schoolmate or schoolmistress, Sappho herself would have been *doctior et pudica*—a right happy blending of comparative and positive. 70 is a quaint apology, not for writing so much but for writing so little, the satire of which is so ingeniously airy that it is possible to interpret its irony in more ways than one. Potitus calls him lazy because he does not bring out more than one book a-year. What time has a man to write poetry? Calls and congratulations (which, somehow, he does not find returned), attendances at religious and official functions, listening the whole day long to other poets, to advocates, to declaimers, to very grammarians, the bath, the *sportula*—why, the whole day slips away sometimes without one's being able to settle to work at all!

The 78th, addressed to Macer, contains the graceful request—

> "Nec multos mihi præferas poetas,
> Uno sed tibi sim minor Catullo"—

which shows Martial's faithfulness to his exquisite master.

The Eleventh and Twelfth, the last of the epigrams proper (for the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*[4] have been dealt with so far as the little that they have concerns us, and the *Liber de Specta-*

[1] Cf. the technical words *carchesia*, *anquina* in the fragment of his *Propempticon Pollionis*, Baehrens, *Poetæ Latini Minores*, vi. 323.

[2] *Grammaticis placeant, et sine grammaticis.*

[3] *V.* the only remaining fragment in Baehrens, *Poet. Lat. Min.*, vi. 370. The satirical piece, usually printed with Juvenal and assigned to a Sulpicia, *may* be hers: but at any rate Martial was not thinking of anything of the kind. He varies his own conceit in vii. 69 on a certain Theophila.

[4] It ought, however, perhaps to be added that these include a considerable batch of inscription-distichs for presents of books from Homer and Virgil downwards. Most of these are decorative but conventional: that on Lucan (194), "There are those who say that I am not a poet; but my bookseller thinks me one," is keen with a double edge.

culis is out of the question), are also fruitful. The common habit of addressing the book itself at its beginning frequently has a literary turn given to it by Martial, and as in the Tenth so in the Eleventh, not one but a batch appears as overture, chiefly dedicatory; while another batch farther on is opened by the promise, certainly not falsified, that the book is going to be the naughtiest of all. The 90th, however, is important for us, though by no means inmaculate, because the sudden fling of a handful of mud, in which Martial too often delights, is led up to by satire on that same preference for uncouth and archaic language, which, as we have seen, so often defrays the satiric criticism of the time. Chrestillus, the victim, it seems, approves no smooth verses; they must roll over rocks and jolt on half-made roads to please him. A verse like

"Luceili columella heic situ' Metrophanes"

is better to him than all Homer, and he worships *terrai frugiferai* and all the jargon of Attius and Pacuvius.

The prose preface of the Twelfth book starts with an excuse for a three years' silence (it would appear that for a considerable time Martial had produced a book yearly), due to the poet's return to Spain. He had been, as the epigram above quoted pleads, too busy or too lazy to write in town; in the country he found himself deprived of the material for writing. The stimulating, teasing occupations of Rome had given place to mere clownish vacancy. However, to please Priscus, he has busied himself again, and he only hopes that his friend will not find his work "not merely Spanish of the Roman Pale, but Spanish pure and simple."[1] In the third epigram there is a half-rueful recommendation (which Thackeray would have translated impeccably) to his book to revisit the dear old places, ending with a distich revindicating, in no wise foolishly, the crown of style—

"Quid titulum poscis? Versus duo tresve legantur,
Clamabunt omnes te, liber, esse meum."

He was right. Nobody but Martial could have written

[1] *Non Hispaniensem sed Hispanum.*

Martial except Catullus himself in his less noble moods; and the boast is in itself a criticism and a just one. Yet Martial had his dignity, and an odd epigram, the 61st of this book, disclaims the mere coarse language in which he seems to us too often to have indulged. And the tale of literary epigrams ceases (I apologise for omissions in the bright and shifting bevy) with another odd piece, which may be either gross flattery, irony of a rather sanguinary kind, or mere playfulness, and in which he remonstrates with his friend Tucca for touching and executing, so as to make competition impossible, every kind of poetry Epic, tragedy, lyric, satire, epigram itself—Martial has tried them all and dropped them, because he feels himself beaten by Tucca. This is not fair; let Tucca leave him at least one kind, the kind that he doesn't care for. It is not fanciful, surely, to find a critique of poetical polypragmatism here also.

It may well seem to some that too much space has been accorded to Martial; but it has been allotted on the principle which, be it mistaken or not, is the principle that underlies this book. We have, in this good-for-nothing trifler, a very considerable number of pronouncements on critical points, or points connected with criticism, and, what is more, we have in him a writer who has a very clear notion of literary criticism in and for his own work. A great poet Martial is not; he has no fine madness, or only the remotest touches of it. He does not look back to the way in which Lucretius had infused that quality into the language; I do not think, speaking under correction, that he ever so much as names him. He does not anticipate (and if he had anticipated, he would not, I think, have welcomed with any pleasure) the tide which, welling in upon the severer Muses of classical Latin style, gave them once more the Siren quality in the Low Latin of the Middle Ages. Farther, he can hardly be said to have any "wood-notes wild"; even his country descriptions, charming as they are, are distinctly artificial. Much as he adores Catullus, it is not for the flashes of pure poetry which we see in that poet. But, on the other hand, Martial sees, not merely with instinctive but with critical certainty, that gift of precision, clearness,

felicity, *venustas*, which the Greek-Latin blend of the Golden and Silver Ages had. He practises and he preaches the cultivation of this. He preaches it at no tedious length: his chosen form as well as his common-sense would have prevented that. But he directly extols the cultivation of style—of that quality which will make any decent judge identify a poet when he has heard three lines of his poem. And he practises what he preaches. Even what the grave and precise (quite truly one must confess) call his moral degradation saves him from confusing the moral with the literary quality of literature —the noble error of most ancient criticism. He has, as scarcely any other ancient writer has, formulated the great critical question, "L'ouvrage est-il bon ou est-il mauvais?" And if he had chosen to write a *De Arte Poetica*, I am bound, shocking as the confession may seem, to say that I think it would have been superior to that of Horace, while he has provided no unimportant *progymnasmata* towards one as it is.

Statius.

From "the mixed and subtle Martial," as Gavin Douglas excellently calls him, we may pass to the poet, perhaps the rival, whom he never mentions[1]—the author of that only adequate Roman description of Lucretius which has been referred to above.[2] The precise sources of the popularity of Statius in the Middle Ages have never yet, I think, been thoroughly investigated. It is, however, not difficult to discern them afar off, and to include among them a certain touch of that uncritical quality which, as we shall see, was one of the main notes of the Middle Ages themselves. Yet the author of the words *furor arduus Lucreti*[3] must have been able at least to appreciate. And the poem which contains that phrase, as well as the prose prefaces of the *Sylvæ* where it occurs, will yield something more bearing on our subject. The first of these prefaces is a curious if not particularly felicitous plea for the legitimacy—indeed, for the necessity—of a poet's indulging in lighter work in the intervals

[1] No one of his contemporaries, except Juvenal (*v. supra*, p. 255), ever does mention Statius. It is indeed usually said that no classical author does so, with the same exception.

[2] P. 216.

[3] *Et docti furor arduus Lucreti. Genethliacon Lucani, Sylv.*, ii. 7. 76.

of *Thebaids* and *Achilleids*. This is something like the view of Pliny: the poet must be a Jack-of-all-poetical-trades Martial knew better. But it is a noteworthy thing (and Martial himself would have been pungent on it) that Statius cannot make his trifles brief. Domitian's horse has nearly three hundred lines. I do not think that there is a single poem in the five books of the *Sylvæ* which falls short of several scores, whatever its metre. In the preface of the second he apologises to his friend Melior for some of the pieces, as *libellos quasi epigrammatis loco scriptos*, and here again Martial might have had something to say about epigrams seventy-seven lines long. That Statius had not cleared up his own mind about criticism appears from the touching and attractive, though not quite consummate, *Ad Claudiam Uxorem*, where the poet, beaten in the public competitions where he had long triumphed, proposes that Naples, and his wife's caresses, shall console him for the loss of tasteless and thankless Rome. But the *Genethliacon Lucani*, a commemorative birth-day poem on Lucan (which would have been a little more effective if we could forget that this tribute to the victim of Nero was written by a flatterer of Domitian), contains the central utterance of Statius about other poets. It is, as nearly everything of Statius has been said to be, too long and too much improvised, though also, like most things, if not everything, of his, it contains fine touches, especially that of Lucan in the shades:—

> "Seu magna sacer et superbus umbra
> Nescis Tartaron, et procul nocentum
> Audis verbera, pallidumque visa
> Matris lampade respicis Neronem."

But its interest for us, besides the Lucretian description, which is itself not improved by *docti*, consists in the long eulogy of Lucan himself, and the repeated, and therefore not probably conventional, advice to him not to be afraid of Virgil—

> "Bætin Mantua provocare noli;"

and after some time—

> "Quin majus loquor; ipsa te Latinis
> Æneis venerabitur canentem."

It would be clear from this, if we did not know it from the evidence of his original work, that Statius was not on the side of the satirists, that he had no objection to the Spanish *ampulla*.

Pliny the Younger: Criticism on the Letters.

The, in all ways very delightful, Epistles[1] of the younger Pliny are not least delightful in the line of literary criticism. Pliny was a confirmed man of letters. In no member of the most interesting group of late Flavian and early Antonine writers do we see more clearly the "bookish" tone which so largely pervaded Roman society. He even, on the celebrated occasion[2] when he tells Tacitus with modest pride that he had bagged three wild boars, *et quidem pulcherrimos*, admits that he sat at the nets with a pencil and a notebook, thus anticipating the action of Kingsley's Lancelot Smith when he took St Francis de Sales to a meet. He takes an intelligent pride in his uncle's literary work, and if he is a little wrong in doubting Martial's power of "lasting" in the letter which he writes after his death,[3] let us remember that Martial had paid him a very pretty compliment (which he quotes and which we have quoted[4]), and that it would not have done to be too certain of the fact of this coming to Prince Posterity. The very first letter[5] admits a particular critical care in composition, and the second gives further particulars thereof. He had never taken such care as with the book that he sends to Arrian. He had tried to follow Demosthenes and Calvus, but few, *quos æquus amavit* (this allusiveness would have been reprehended by some of our modern critics), can really catch up such masters. The matter was good, and he had sometimes ventured to extract special ornaments from the "perfume-bottles"[6] of Cicero. But Arrian must give him a

[1] It did not seem necessary to specify editions of Persius, Juvenal, and Martial. For Pliny I use that of Keil, Leipsic, 1886.

[2] I. vi. Ed. cit., p. 5.

[3] III. 21, p. 65.

[4] *V. supra*, p. 264.

[5] *Hortatus es ut epistolas si quas paulo accuratius scripsissem colligerem . . . Collegi.*

[6] ληκύθους. The word, whether from the use of its diminutive in the *Frogs* or not, seems to have become a stock metaphor for rhetorical tropes. It has even been compared to *ampulla*, though I fancy it was not quite so uncomplimentary, and meant "prettiness," "conceit," rather than "bombast." Both, however, illustrate the view, put frequently in Book I. and here, as to the ancient conception of style.

careful revision, for the booksellers tell him that the thing is already popular. He has many of the technical phrases which half attract and half repel modern readers, because they are so difficult to adjust. There is something like a miniature review, in his description of the works of Pompeius Saturninus to Erucius in i. 16. This Pompey has something so *varium*, so *flexibile*, so *multiplex*, that he holds Pliny's entire attention. He had heard him pleading both with and without preparation, *acriter et ardenter, nec minus polite et ornate*. There were in these speeches *acutæ, crebræque sententiæ*, a grave and decorous construction, sonorous and archaic terms (Martial and Persius would have shaken heads). "All these things," he says, "please strangely when they are rolled forth in a rushing flood, and they please even if they are read over again. You will think as I do when you have his orations in your hands, orations comparable to those of any of the ancients whom he rivals. Yet he is still more satisfactory in History, whether you take his brevity, or his light, or his sweetness, or his splendour, or his sublimity. In popular addresses he is the same as in Oratory, though more compressed and circumscript, and wound together. His verses are as good as Catullus or Calvus, and full of elegance, sweetness, bitterness, love! and his Letters (which he calls his wife's) are like Plautus or Terence without the metre." Truly an Admirable Crichton of a Pompeius Saturninus! and great pity it is that he has not come down to us, this "Cambridge the everything"[1] —of *circa* 100 A.D.

But the most famous of Pliny's letters in connection with this subject is the twentieth of the first book,[2] to Tacitus, in which he deals with a set question of literary criticism. "A certain learned and skilful man" maintains that in oratory brevity is everything. In certain cases, Pliny admits, but only in certain cases. The adversary objects Lysias among the Greeks, the Gracchi and Cato among the Romans. Pliny

[1] If the reader is in ignorance of this worthy, he can cure his disease by any one of three pleasant medicines —Boswell, Horace Walpole, and Mr Austin Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*.

[2] P. 16.

retorts with Demosthenes, Æschines, Hyperides, Pollio, Cæsar, Cælius, Cicero. Indeed he does not fear to lay it down as a general principle, "the bigger the better."[1] The adversary says that the orators spoke less than they published. Pliny dissents. And then he discusses the matter generally—from the point of view of oratory in the main, but partly also from that of literature. And his general view, like that of his generation (I hardly know whether to include his master Quintilian or not), may be taken as put in the phrase, *Non enim amputata oratio et abscissa, sed lata et magnifica et excelsa tonat, fulgurat, omnia denique perturbat ac miscet.*[2]

The third letter of the second book is a set panegyric of Isæus,[3] which would be of more interest if criticisms of orators were not so common; the fifth of the third is the notice of the life, literary and other, of Pliny the Elder. The obituary criticism of Martial, to which reference has been made, occurs in the 21st of this third book, and is a little patronising. But the contemner of brevity, even if he were a private friend and a flattered one, and if he had (as most Romans would have had) no objection to Martial's freedom of subject and language, could hardly be expected to do full justice to the epigrammatist.

We are less able to judge the literary part of the flattering epistle (iv. 3) to Antoninus, afterwards Emperor, which is so much in the extravagant style of Roman compliment that, in the absence of the work referred to, it gives us no critical information whatever. The literary characteristic of the future Pius appeared to Pliny to be the mixture of the severe with the agreeable—of the grave with the gay, which made his style

[1] *Ut aliæ bonæ res, ita bonus liber melior est quisque, quo major.*

[2] This letter contains an interesting *mot* of Aquilius Regulus, the brilliant and questionable orator-informer, of whom Pliny frequently speaks with a sort of mixture of admiration and dislike, reminding one of the way in which men used to speak of Lord Chancellor Westbury. "You," said Regulus to him, "hunt out everything in your brief. I see the throat at once, and go for it"—*ego jugulum statim video, hunc premo.* There is some point in Pliny's retort that people who do this not infrequently hit knee or ankle instead.

[3] *Not* the great Attic; but an Assyrian rhetor of Pliny's own time, supposed to be also referred to by Juvenal in the well-known phrase, *Isæo torrentior* (iii. 74).

extraordinary sweet, as the eighteenth century would have said. The usual honey and its maker-bees put in the usual appearance to express Pliny's sensations when he reads his correspondent's Greek epigrams and iambics. He thinks of Callimachus or Herodes (doubtless our just recovered Herondas). Only neither has done anything so humane, so venust, so sweet, so loving, so keen, so correct. How could a Roman write such Greek? It is more Attic than Athens, and Pliny grudges such a writer to the Greeks, though there is no doubt that if Antoninus would only write in his mother tongue he would do better still.

IV. 14, enclosing some hendecasyllabics which have not come down (from other specimens they are a tolerable loss), contains some interesting and curious remarks on the always burning and never yet settled question of morality in literature. Pliny adopts to the full, as a matter of principle, the doctrine which his friend Martial had both practised and preached, that naughty things, and even the naughtiest words, may figure in poetry,—that, as Pliny himself puts it, with the still higher authority of Catullus—

> "Nam castum esse decet pium poetam
> Ipsum—versiculos nihil necesse est."

Only he himself declines to use the naughty words,[1] not out of prudery, but out of timidity. He follows this up with the sounder doctrine that everything must be judged in its own kind.

Another short letter to Antoninus (iv. 18) not merely repeats the praise of his Greek epigrams, but informs us that Pliny himself has put some of these in Latin. A longer one, which follows, to Calpurnia Hispulla, contains an elaborate eulogy of the lady's niece, Pliny's second wife, who shows her good taste and virtue by learning her husband's books by heart, instructing herself in literature generally for love of him, and singing his verses. And later, with something of the same innocence or lack of humour which was a Roman—in fact, has generally been a Latin—characteristic, he tells us that he has been for three days

[1] *Verba nuda.*

listening *cum summa voluptate* to a certain Sentius Augurinus reciting his poems or poemkins (*poematia*). Sentius, it seems, performed many things with lightness, many with sublimity, many with beauty, many with tenderness, many with sweetness, many *with bile*. It is not quite clear under which head comes the specimen he produces, which is a rather feeble compliment to Pliny himself. "Vides," says Pliny, after quoting it, "quam acuta omnia, quam apta, quam expressa." Besides, he is the friend of Spurinna and Antoninus. What an *emendatus adolescens!*

V. 8[1] is a not uninteresting paper on History. Tutinius Capito wishes him, as he tells us others had done, to write this. Pliny is not ill-disposed to do so, not because he thinks he shall do it very well, but (the sentiment is a fine one, though a little bombastically expressed) because "it seems to him one of the best of actions to rescue from perishing that which ought to be eternal."[2] His idea of history, however, is not very lofty. Oratory and Poetry, he says, must have style; History pleases howsoever it be written, because of the natural curiosity of man—a doctrine which, in slightly changed matter, has been joyfully accepted by the usual novelist. Besides, his uncle had been a diligent historian. Then why does he delay? Because he wants to execute a careful recension of his speeches in important cases, and he hardly feels equal to both tasks, while, though there is much in common between Oratory and History, they are also different. The contrast is curious, and shows the overweening position which Oratory had with the ancients. To History, says Pliny, things humble and sordid, or at least mediocre, belong: to Oratory, all that is exquisite, splendid, and lofty.[3] The bare bones, muscles, and nerves suit history:

[1] There is another interesting critical remark at the end of the famous description of the villa (v. 6): "I think it the first duty of a writer to *read his own title*, and constantly ask himself what he sat down to write, and to be sure that if he sticks to his subject he will never be too long, but will be hopelessly so if he drags other matters in."

[2] *Non pati occidere, quibus æternitas debeatur.*

[3] This, of course, is the old invidious distinction between tragedy and comedy revived in other material. Cf. the curious passage in Tacitus (*Ann.*, xiii. 31) in which he, for his part, glances disdainfully at those who think "beams and foundation-stones" (Nero's amphitheatre) worth mentioning. Such

Oratory must have the swelling bulk of flesh and the waving plumes of hair. History pleases by rough, bitter energy:[1] Oratory by long-drawn sweetness. Diction, style, construction —all are different. After which he gives a somewhat unexpected turn to the famous Thucydidean saying, by admitting that history is the *ktema*, and the *agonisma* oratory. And, therefore, he thinks that he had better not attempt at once two things so different. A letter to Suetonius about the books of both (v. 10), another to Spurinna (v. 17) about a recitation by Calpurnius Piso, a third (vi. 15) on a thin jest by Javolenus Priscus at another recitation by a descendant of Propertius (who began "Prisce jubes," and was interrupted by Javolenus, *Ego vero non jubeo*), may be glanced at rather than discussed.

Perhaps there is no better document of Pliny's literary criticism, both in its strength and in its weakness, than vi. 17. He writes in a state of *indignatiuncula* (let us translate "mild wrath"), which he can only relieve by working it off in a letter to his friend Restitutus. He has been at one of the eternal recitations, where the book recited was not so usual; indeed, it was *absolutissimus* — quite "A per se," as our ancestors would have said. But one or two of the audience (clever[2] fellows, as they and a few others thought) listened to it as if they were deaf mutes. They did not open their lips: they did not clap: they did not even rise from their seats save when they were tired of sitting. What is the good of such gravity, such wisdom, nay, such laziness, arrogance, *sinisterity* (a good word!), or, to cut things short, madness, which leads men to spend a whole day [the terrors of recitation were obviously not exaggerated by the satirists] in offending and making an enemy of a man whom you have visited as a friend? Are you clever? Do not show envy: the envier is the lesser. Nay, whether you can yourself do as well, or less well, all the same praise him,

things should be kept for journals (*diurnis urbis actis*): it is for the dignity of the Roman people that only illustrious matters should find place in Annals. The two thoughts are characteristic of the two men.

[1] *Vi, amaritudine, instantia.*

[2] *Diserti*, used here, as *disertior* is lower, with the slightly invidious sense which often attaches to the word, just as it does to the English equivalent here used for it.

whether he be inferior or superior or equal. Your superior, because, if he is not praiseworthy, still less are you; your equal or inferior, because the better he is, in that case, the better you are. Pliny, for his part, is wont to venerate and admire anybody who does anything in literature. It is a difficult thing, sir, an arduous, a fastidious, and it has a knack of bringing scorn on those who scorn it.[1] Restitutus will surely agree: he is the most amiable and considerate of judges. We may mark this passage as, of many interesting ones, that which gives us Pliny's measure as a literary critic best.

But the list of his noteworthy "places" is by no means closed. VI. 21 gives us his standpoint in another famous quarrel — that of Ancients and Moderns. He admires the former, but by no means so as to despise the latter. He does not hold with the doctrine of the senescence of nature. He recently heard Vergilius Romanus recite a comedy in the Old Comedy kind, which was as good as it could be. The same man has written mimiambics with perfect grace, comedies in another kind as good as Menander's; he has force, grandeur, subtlety, bitterness, sweetness, neatness; he glorifies virtue, attacks vice, invents his personages,[2] and uses real ones, with equal appropriateness. And (as by this time we begin to expect in such cases) "In writing about *me* he has only gone wrong by excessive kindness; and, after all, poets may feign." One sees that the excellent Pliny's geese were swans in every quill.

VII. 4 deals at some length with his own poems, and gives some hexameters about Tiro and Cicero, which are in style quite worthy of the subject. There are some elegiacs (rather better) in vii. 8, which is an elaborate recommendation of literary study—the turning of Greek into Latin, and *vice versa*, the refashioning and rearrangement of work already done, the alternation of oratorical practice with history, letter-writing, and verse of the lighter kind, which receives an elaborate and not unhappy encomium. As for reading, read

[1] *Est enim res difficilis, ardua, fastidiosa, et quæ eos, a quibus contemnitur, invicem contemnat.*

[2] So I translate *nominibus*.

all the best models in all the styles in which you write. VII. 17 is on recitation; 20 of the same book is one of several interesting, though slightly amusing, letters to Tacitus, in which Pliny implies it to be his own opinion, and quotes it as that of others, that he and Tacitus were the two greatest literary men of Rome, and that it was quite wonderful that they were such friends. What Tacitus thought of the conjunction we do not know; he was probably too well bred a man to put his thought in words, though a Tacitean expression of it would indeed be a treasure. In vii. 25 we meet another "swan," Terentius Junior, who writes things *quam tersa omnia! quam Latina! quam Græca!* Later, in the 30th, a friend having compared his work, in vindication of Helvidius Priscus, to that of Demosthenes against Midias, he confesses that he had had the piece in view, though he thinks it would have been *improbum et pœne furiosum* to have imagined rivalry possible. In viii. 4 he encourages the friend to write an epic poem in Greek on the Dacian war, thereby incurring a considerable responsibility. The descendant of Propertius, on whom Javolenus Priscus made that surpassing joke, recurs in ix. 22 with fresh praise; and the last literary letter of importance (the 26th of the same) is on what may be called the grand style in oratory.

Here, as elsewhere, there may no doubt be room for difference of opinion as to the space and importance allowed to our witnesses. From the point of view of this book, however, Pliny's testimony is of the utmost importance. We may regret — I certainly do — that an equal abundance of documents of the same character has not come to us from some one of greater literary competence—from Aristotle, or even from Dionysius, from Longinus, or even from Quintilian. But this is distinctly a case where the better is enemy to the good. For the purpose of ascertaining what was the actual state of critical opinion and literary taste at a given time, it is of more value to possess such a collection as this of Pliny's than to have fifty *Arts of Poetry*.

Let us "write off" liberally at the outset for the drawbacks of the document. Pliny's Letters, pleasant as they are, are

not free from a suspicion, and, considering some statements of their own, something more than a suspicion, of being not entirely spontaneous: they were, at any rate in some cases, evidently written for publication. The author himself, though a man of excellent learning, of the completest cultivation of his day, of wide and ardent literary interests, and of no little commonsense, was, as some of his quoted judgments will have shown, not quite sufficiently possessed of the finest or most discriminating literary judgment. Moreover, he had a somewhat omnivorous and disproportionate opinion of the value of literary work, merely as such, even merely as something that looked such—compilation, translation, copying verse and prose, what not. Further, in these characteristics he to a great extent reflected those of his time—a time of great and active attention to literature, but rather one of talent than of genius, a period of decadence in many respects, and hardly of resurrection in any, and lastly, a period of doubtful literary taste, inclining, when it was sincere, to the florid and Asiatic, when it affected superiority, to a forced Pseudo-Atticism and concinnity.

Yet it will readily be perceived that none of these allowances is damning to the individual, while most of them even increase his value as a representative of the period itself. That he was, and was regarded by the time itself as, one of the most eminent of contemporary men of letters, cannot reasonably be doubted, though he certainly yokes himself rather unequally with Tacitus. And he is none the worse witness that, though a generous admirer of antiquity, he avowedly was by no means so out of conceit with his own time as men of letters often are. That this age was no decrepit one need hardly be said — with Persius "dead ere his prime," and Martial, Juvenal, Quintilian, Tacitus, Statius, and Pliny himself, in full flourishing, with Marcus Aurelius and Arrian coming, with Lucian and Apuleius not far off —to mention no others — it had something considerable to show and say for itself. If we can obtain anything like a clear view of its opinions on literary criticism (to which it was naturally inclined, as being itself not of the very first,

and having pasts of the very first behind it), we shall not do ill. And Pliny gives us help of a very special kind, and in very abundant degree, for the attainment of such a view, which we may proceed to take, after noticing briefly the only other documents of the time which require notice for our purpose.

These are the Apocrypha[1] of Quintilian, which are, for more reasons than one, best regarded apart from the *Institutes*. There are, in the first place, the *Declamations*, already referred to[2]—nineteen complete, with sketches, fragments, and skeletons of a much larger number, which even thus falls short of the huge total of nearly four hundred assigned to him after a fashion. If the whole were written on the scale of the score that we possess, they would fill some four thousand closely printed pages. Interesting, in a fashion, they are; as pointed out above, they supply, with the works of the elder Seneca, our only considerable bodies in Latin of that work of the schools which for centuries occupied the growing intellects of the two great ancient literary nations, and which supplied the never-blunted point of the satirist's

"Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias."

Seneca has been treated already in his proper place. The Pseudo-Quintilian (for there is hardly a page of the *Declamations* which does not fly in the face of the *Institutes*) gives us speeches, adjusted to the strict canons of *status* and the rest, written in the well-known style of the Ciceronian superlative (one wonders that, simply to save breath and time, the bar of Rome did not agree that any one who said *-issimus* should be sconced an amphora, or, if that seem excessive, at least a *congius*), extremely ingenious now and then, but of the

[1] The *Declamations* were last edited, I think, by Ritter in the Teubner Library. That invaluable collection puts (as indeed is usual) the *Dialogus* with the other minor works of Tacitus, ed. Halm. It may also be found, with the same company, in the new Oxford *Bibliotheca Classicorum*, ed. Furneaux. I use a pretty and convenient joint edition of the nineteen complete Declamations and the Dialogue, which appeared at Oxford, without editor's name, in 1692.

[2] *V. supra*, p. 230 *sq.*

most fantastic and arbitrary quality. The chief interest of them, at least from our point of view, is, that in the mere reading one understands how impossible it was that attention to such things should consist with attention to true literary criticism.

The Dialogus de Claris Oratoribus.

The *Dialogus de Claris Oratoribus*, traditionally ascribed to Tacitus, though some will have it to be nothing less than the otherwise lost *De Causis corruptæ Eloquentiæ* which Quintilian, as we know from himself, certainly wrote, is a much more meritorious performance. The style is very unlike[1] that of the surely unmistakable author of the *Germania* and the *Annals*, the method does not seem, to me at least, after a good deal of study of Quintilian, to be his. But it is very likely about their date, and by no contemptible author. The opening certainly chimes in not ill with the title of Quintilian's missing treatise. A certain Justus Falinus had asked why, after the magnificent crops of oratory which former ages had yielded, the very name of *orator* had almost died out, and had been supplanted by "counsel"[2] and "advocate" and "patron." The author replies, with a due Ciceronianism, that he had better rub up his memory of a remarkable conversation on the subject heard in his youth. Curiatius Maternus, both poet and orator, had recited a tragedy on Cato which excited the town nearly as much as another piece of the same name sixteen hundred years later; and Marcus Aper, a man of Gaulish origin, consular rank, and great fame, and Julius Secundus, met (with the writer) at Maternus' house to talk over it. The first of these rather despised literature, relying on mother-wit; the second was said to be indebted more to art than to nature: but both were among the leading counsel of their day. Secundus gently suggests that Cato is a dangerous subject, and Maternus says

[1] I say this in some fear and trembling, with such an authority as the late Mr Nettleship against me. But I have been accustomed for a good many years to compare styles in more languages than one or two, and I think these most unlike. Even the argument that a man may suit his style to his work is not conclusive, for here it is the *general* unlikeness of tone and flavour, which cannot be wholly disguised, that decides me.

[2] *Causidici.*

that he has another tragedy in hand (*Thyestes*) with which to follow it. Then Aper opens fire upon him: first, for deserting oratory and the bar for idle play-writing; secondly, for choosing foolish fancy subjects like Thyestes. Maternus appeals to Secundus. He is accustomed to Aper's denunciations of poetry. Will not Secundus act as judge? Secundus says that he is not quite impartial because of his friendship for Saleius Bassus (a contemporary epic poet of whom we hear in Quintilian as a particular friend of his). Oh, says Aper, let Bassus and others, who cannot compass oratory, cultivate poetry if they like. Here is Maternus who can: so he is wasting his time. And he embarks on a warm and by no means ineloquent eulogy of eloquence from its practical side, urging not merely its great political importance but other points. Eloquence opens positions of opulence and power, makes you valuable to your friends and the State, is a safeguard to yourself, gives fame, wealth, dignity. As for poetry, it brings none of these things. It is of no use, and the pleasure it gives is short, idle, and unprofitable. What is the good of it? Who thinks much even of Bassus himself? And if he or his friends are in any difficulty, to whom will they go? Why, to an orator. The poet spends an infinity of labour on his poem, compasses heaven and earth to whip an audience together, and gets nothing from it. Certainly Vespasian did give Bassus five hundred sestertia, and very noble it was of him; but this was mere alms. An orator *earns* his money. Besides, your poets have to skulk in the country, and even if they stay in town, who cares about them, or goes to see them? Of course, as before said, if a man cannot be an orator, why, let him be a poet. But eloquence is as great a thing from the merely literary point of view, and far more useful.

Maternus takes this diatribe quite coolly, and replies readily enough. He has had some little experience, he says, and some little fame in both oratory and poetry: he does not care for the publicity (so precious to Aper) which the former brings, and, holding the contrary opinion to his friend's, he thinks the country life far higher and better than that of the town. The great poets of old, if you reckon mere fame, are at least the

equals of the orators, and (here we come to another point of contact with Quintilian) there are more nowadays who run down Cicero than Virgil. The unquiet and anxious life of the orator has no charms for him. He wants neither more money nor more power: and he would have himself figured on his tomb, not serious and frowning, but merry and crowned. At the peroration of Maternus comes in Vipsanius[1] Messalla, who, being informed by Secundus of the nature of the dispute, expresses his approval of it, but hints a strong preference for the *older* orators. Aper catches this up rather hotly, after his manner: and after a little general conversation puts the obvious *aporia*, Who *are* the old orators? running over the history of Roman oratory, with some not uninteresting criticisms, and a strong contention in favour of his own contemporaries. Maternus and Messalla take up the same matter from other sides, and the dialogue ends.

This piece at first promises considerably, and it cannot be said to perform badly in any place; but its conclusion and middle part are of less importance to us than seemed likely at the beginning. The panegyrics of Oratory and Poetry respectively, in which Aper and Maternus indulge, might well have led to a fuller and more searching analysis of the respective literary merits of the two—instead of which we have from Aper only a rather Philistine exaltation of the superior use and profit of oratory, from Maternus a generous, but slightly vague and rhetorical, exaltation of the qualities of poetry and the delights of the poet. From the entrance of Messalla the piece becomes little more than a contribution to the everlasting ancient-and-modern quarrel on the one hand, and to the history of Roman oratory on the other. Yet in Aper, at least, we have a vigorous projection of the positive Roman spirit, combined with a fancy for pregnant and precious style; in Maternus, an indication of that mainly dilettante and bookish temper which the satirists blame in their literary, and especially their poetical, contemporaries; and in Messalla (who is taken by the partisans of the Tacitean authorship to represent Tacitus himself), an instance of that looking back to better times

[1] Or Vipstanus, as they read now.

which is, at any rate sometimes, if not invariably, a token of literary decadence.

Mr Nettleship's estimate of it.

Here again, as in the case of Cicero, it is necessary to break the rule of not entering upon controversy, lest by silence one incur the blame of neglecting more than competent authority. As in that other case, Mr Nettleship's estimate of the critical value of the *Dialogus* (which he unhesitatingly attributes to Tacitus) is higher, though not so much higher, than mine. He ranks it with, but above, the *Brutus*, as "the two great documents of Latin criticism": I should put both as such (though Cicero and Tacitus were both of them far cleverer than Quintilian) below the *Institutes*, and also below other things.

The reason of the difference somewhat consoles me for the fact. Mr Nettleship was evidently bitten with that noble error, the belief that criticism of literature must be criticism of something that is *not* literature. Tacitus seems to him to ask "under what social conditions great writing and great speaking arise,"—a most interesting question, but an excursus from criticism proper. "He sees clearly, and this is the important point which characterises the treatise, that literature must be taken and judged as the expression of national life, not as a matter of form and of scholastic teaching."

For "scholastic teaching" so be it: that also is extraneous to the central matter. But on the other point one must throw away the scabbard. Never will literature be judged adequately —seldom will it be, even within limits, judged accurately— as "an expression of national life." From this and kindred fallacies come, and always have come, a brood of monsters, the folly, almost as great as its opposite, that "a poet must be a good man," the folly that you can judge literature by remembering that there is much water-meadow in England[1] —hundreds of others. That literature is an expression of national life nobody need deny—that national life can never be estimated without an estimate of literature is, if anything, still more true. But literature is first of all litera-

[1] Those who have an accurate memory of M. Taine's *English Literature* and of his *English Notes* will not object to this apparent impossibility.

ture, and it must be judged, like all other things, by the laws of its essence, and not by the laws of even its inseparable accidents.

How different was Mr Nettleship's point of view may be judged from the mere fact that he actually passes over the first fifteen chapters, which to me seem to contain most of the literary criticism of the piece. Nor can I (though he himself fully admits the oratorical preoccupation both here and still more in Cicero) help thinking that the substitution of the English "style" for "eloquentia" and "oratio" amounts to a certain begging of the question. Much that is true of the orator is no doubt also true of the writer, but not all: and the connection with life, with public national life, on which such stress is here laid, undoubtedly applies to oratory, whether of the pulpit, the senate-house, or the bar, far more than it applies to books. The most *literary* side of oratory (I am not ashamed to make the concession) is the lowest—that of pure epideictic. But then, that is because oratory is, after all, only applied, not pure literature.

The general literary taste of the Silver Age.

We see, then, from this interesting piece, almost as much as from the poets and Pliny, that the age was, so to say, polyhistoric rather than original, and that, while it was no stranger to the very sound opinion that the goodness of a thing must be measured in its own kind, it still had not cleared up its mind about the relative value of different kinds. Although oratory had, with the rarest exceptions, become the mere art of the advocate, or the mere business of the travelling or resident rhetorician, it still had a most disproportionate position. Although the satirist laughed at the custom of writing artificial Greek epics and tragedies, it is clear that these still held the highest place in the general opinion. The bilingual practice, not merely in these but in other kinds, of itself inferred a certain lack of "race," vernacularity, genuineness, in either literature. Some kinds of letters were still hardly known; Pliny's own indulgent reference to *fabellæ* is all the more interesting that we are not so very far from the *Lucius* and the *Golden Ass*. In almost all

departments odd conventions and assumptions prevailed, such as the necessity of loose subjects, and even of coarse language, in *vers de société*. And it was probably the working of this, and of the strict ideas as to certain forms and their laws, that caused the jack-of-all-trade tendency to which we have more than once referred. If the rules are pretty clearly laid down, and if you are a man of reasonable learning and intelligence, attention to such rules will secure success. There is no reason why as Pliny himself seems to have thought in his own case and the cases of many of his friends, you should not be at once an orator and a historian, an epic poet and a comic, a dramatist and an epigram-writer. And the age still believed devoutly in the rules, though free-lances like Martial might kick at them in verse, and though Quintilian, with his unfailing good sense, might hint that there were far too many Figures, and that the subdivisions of Greek rhetoric were in many cases idle.

"Faultlessness."

In nothing, perhaps, is this tendency of ancient criticism better shown than in its attitude to the question of Faultlessness. Of course, on this question there were two parties, with many subdivisions in each. There were the extreme classics of that classic time, the wooden persons of whom Martial tells us, for whom it was enough if a thing was not "correct," to whom a fault was a fault—indelible, incompensable, to be judged off-hand and Draconically. And at the other side there were the sensible persons, like Quintilian, like Pliny, like Martial himself (not to mention Longinus, whom some would have to be their contemporary), who contended that faults might be made up by beauties, who sneered at *mere* "faultlessness." But no one, not Longinus himself, seems to have taken up the position which the boldest and most consistent (it would be question-begging to say the best) modern critics take, that the whole calculus is wrong—that this notion of "faults" made up by "beauties," of a balance-sheet, debtor and creditor, with the result struck one way or the other, is wholly a misconception. Two, I suppose, of the most representative passages in English poetry touching this subject are Lear's

apostrophe to the elements, and Milton's episode of Sin and Death. The extreme stop-watch and foot-rule critics of the first century, like those of the eighteenth, and, perhaps, some (though they are not a prevailing party) even at the present day, would call these undoubted faults, both of them sinning against the law or conception of measure in language, and the second offending still more gravely against that or those of decency, propriety, the becoming, in imagery, subject, language. The defenders, or those who might have been the defenders, of Shakespeare and Milton, from the other point of view, would admit in varying degrees that the things were faulty; but would urge the pathos of the first, the gloomy magnificence of the second, the force and power and grandeur of both, as *redeeming* them—in a degree and to an extent again varying with the individual critic.

Now, a thoroughgoing "Romantic" and comparative critic of the modern type, while he would, of course, scout the first party, would be loath to adopt either the method or the exact conclusions of the second. "Let us clear our minds of cant," he would say. "These things are not 'faults' at all. They do not leave the court pardoned on consideration of the previous or subsequent good behaviour of the culprit, but simply because there is no stain on his or their character. There is no need to plead extenuating circumstances: we stand for acquittal *sans phrase*. These things might be faults elsewhere, in other poems: they are not so here. They are the absolutely right things in the right place, producing the right effect, driven home by the right power to the right mark. Shakespeare and Milton *have* faults—the somewhat excessive tendency of the first to play on words out of season as well as in, and the deplorable propensity of the second to joke when joking was absolutely impossible to him. But these are not of the character of the Longinian or Quintilianian 'fault' at all. They do not endear the poets; they make them less good; we wish they *were* faultless in this sense. Your 'faultlessness' simply means that the man has that most hopeless of all faults—mediocrity: and your 'fault' is simply derived from the

existence in your mind of a more or less complicated set of rules which have no real existence. Nay," he might proceed, "the extremest classical men are sounder in a way than you are. They are right in thinking that a fault *is* a fault, and can never be 'redeemed,' much less purged, by a beauty. They are only wrong in not knowing what beauties or what faults really are."

Now, I do not say whether the criticism of antiquity was right or wrong in not taking this view. But I think there is absolutely no evidence that it was ever taken at this time.

Ornate or plain style.

In some other agreements and differences we find ourselves more at home. The everlasting questions of archaic or modern language, of conceited or direct thought, of ornate or plain style, occupied the critics of the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, just as they have occupied those of more recent pasts, are occupying those of the present, and will occupy those of the future. As has been indicated in detail, there was not here quite the critical unanimity which some periods have shown on these and similar questions. Among the general there was something like an agreement; it seems undeniable that the popular taste of Roman audiences at recitations ran towards elaborate and slightly archaic phraseology, to Greek literary subjects, and (both in verse-epics and tragedies and in prose declamations) to topsy-turvy conceit. This was evidently frequent in verse, though time has carried away most traces of it; and in prose it is not entirely alien from the magnificent phrase-making of Tacitus, it shows itself amply in the rhetoric of Seneca the son, as in the earlier rhetorical examples of Seneca the father, is almost openly defended by Pliny, and seems to receive a certain amount of "colour" (as the rhetoricians themselves would have said) even from some passages of Quintilian. It is very noteworthy that all these prose-writers incline more or less to the artificial side, while the verse-satirists argue and sally for terseness, elegance, concinnity. And the cause may not improbably be sought in those very declamations of which mention has been so often made.

We have no enormous stock of them, which is not to be regretted; but in the surviving examples we have material which is welcome in its way, and which amply proves what has been said.[1]

[1] I am not sure that I should have given any place here to Cornelius Fronto, if his ticket of admission had not been (rather contumeliously) countersigned by Mr Nettleship. The low opinion which Marcus Aurelius seems to have had of literature may possibly have been in part excused by his preceptor's utterances on the subject. He appears to have been an eminent representative of the "labelling" school of critics. Lucilius is "gracile" (this is not quite Horace's view), Albucius and Pacuvius mediocre, Accius unequal, Ennius multiform. Sallust writes history *structe*, Pictor *incondite*, Claudius *lepide*, Antias *invenuste*, Sisenna *longinque*, Cato *verbis multijugis*, Cœlius *singulis*. One cannot help "nodding approval and saying, 'This is very satisfactory to know,'" as Lady Kew did when she was informed that "Alfred was a trump, and Ethel a brick, and Barnes a snob." But if Mr Nettleship thought that æsthetic, as opposed to philosophical, criticism could not get beyond this system of tickets-of-leave, he was surely mistaken.

CHAPTER III.

QUINTILIAN.

THE 'INSTITUTES' — PREFACE — BOOK I.: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND GRAMMAR—BOOKS II.-VII. ONLY RELEVANT NOW AND THEN—HOW TO LECTURE ON AN AUTHOR—WIT—BOOK VIII.: STYLE; PERSPICUITY; ELEGANCE—BOOKS VIII., IX.: TROPES AND FIGURES—COMPOSITION—PROSE RHYTHM — BOOK X.: SURVEY OF CLASSICAL LITERATURE — GREEK: HOMER AND OTHER EPIC POETS—THE LYRISTS—DRAMA—THE HISTORIANS — THE ORATORS AND PHILOSOPHERS — LATIN: VIRGIL—OTHER EPIC AND DIDACTIC POETS — ELEGIAC AND MISCELLANEOUS—DRAMA — HISTORY — ORATORY: CICERO — PHILOSOPHY: CICERO AND SENECA — MINOR COUNSEL OF THE TENTH BOOK — BOOKS XI. AND XII. —THE STYLES OF ORATORY — "ATTICISM" — LITERARY QUALITY OF GREEK AND LATIN—QUINTILIAN'S CRITICAL "ETHOS."

The Institutes.

IN passing, say, from Cicero, the chief prose Latin critic of præ-Augustan times, to Quintilian, the chief of post-Augustan, and indeed of Latin critics of all dates, we come to a man of much less genius no doubt, and, in particular, of far less creative literary power, but still to one who, for our special purpose, has some very considerable advantages. It is not merely that the Spanish-Roman is a professional critic, as well as a rhetorician—that he is as much *the* professional critic of Latin as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (whom he much resembles, and to whom, as has been said, he possibly owes not a little) is of Greek. He has over the greater writer (whom he admires so generously) the further advantage of complete freedom from that touch of dilettantism (one is sometimes almost tempted to use a harsher word and call it quackery) which besets Cicero whenever he is not actually pleading or

debating, and which is not invariably lost even then. Further, Quintilian is the only critic of antiquity (for even Longinus, as we saw, merely glances at the subject) who seriously takes the two languages, seriously compares them, and, by the help of the comparison, acquires a view-point over literature as such—not merely as Greek or Latin literature—which was shut to all his predecessors and most of his followers. If the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* of Aristotle form the great book of critical method for ancient times, if the Περὶ Ὕψους is the great book of their critical inspiration; the *Institutes of Oratory* contain the fullest, the most intelligent, the most satisfactory applications of criticism to literature, as it presented itself to an intelligent and thoroughly educated person, whose eyes were sharpened by long expert use, at the end of the first century, when, except for a few belated authors, mostly of curiosities, the list of the great writers of antiquity was all but closed. The book[1] is extremely well written; it is, with a few *cruces*, remarkably clear, and its range and thoroughness leave practically nothing to desire.

This wide range of it (which, according to different, but, in each case, defensible interpretations of its title, busies itself with the whole education of an orator, or with the whole theory and practice of oratory) naturally makes it include much which does not fall strictly within our subject. But nearly the whole of three books, the eighth, ninth, and tenth, and a large and important section of the twelfth, are devoted directly to that subject; while there are references to it almost throughout. We shall therefore, as we did in the case of Aristotle and Longinus, give a kind of running abstract of the whole, dwelling very briefly on the irrelevant, somewhat more fully on the partly

[1] Whether its correct title be *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, or *De Institutione Oratoria*, and whether this be better translated *Principles of Oratory*, or *Of the Education of an Orator*, are questions not very important *to us*. The sense of "Institutes" may be illustrated by the old division of academical chairs in, for instance, Medicine into "Institutes" (*i.e.*, "Theory") and "Practice." But Quintilian includes a good deal of the practical side. All the editions of Quintilian are either antiquated by, or more or less based upon, that of Spalding and Zumpt, with Lexicon, &c., by Bonnell, Leipsic, 1798-1834. I find the little Tauchnitz print of the text (ibid., 1829) very useful. The Bohn translation, by the ill-starred J. S. Watson, though not impeccable, will serve English readers well enough.

relevant, fully on the rest, and returning to the consideration of special points later.

In a sort of Advertisement, to and for the use of his publisher Trypho, and in a prefatory dedication to his friend Marcellus Victorius, Quintilian gives some information about the origin and object of the work. From this we learn, among other things, that part-cause at least of its actual appearance was the fact, not unknown in more modern times, of unauthorised publication of his lectures by note-taking pupils.

Preface.

The first book is devoted to the subject of the education of boys from the earliest age, a subject on which Quintilian speaks with much knowledge and good sense, as well as kindliness. But from this he soon passes to Grammar, and his importance for us begins. For his treatment of the subject is quite in the larger and humaner sense, insisting from the first on critical reading, though he seems, as indeed we should expect, to regard the "desperate hook" of the extremer kind of verbal critic with little favour. It is noteworthy that he alleges music to be necessary, because the grammarian has to speak of metre and rhythm. And passing rapidly from considerations of orthography, right pronunciation, and audience, he arrives at the all-important subject of "correctness," and of its attainment, negatively by the avoidance of barbarisms and solecisms, positively by the selection of the best words in the best arrangement. Observations of special importance in this context may be cited: That the word in itself (*i.e.*, out of connection) has no merit except its inherent euphony; that (a most pregnant remark) it is often difficult to distinguish Faults from Figures of speech; and some exceedingly interesting, but also more than ordinarily difficult, remarks on tone and accent-variation. In all these grammatical notes, which are pretty full and numerous, and often very curious—showing that, as he himself says pleasantly, though he is not writing a treatise on Grammar, yet as it lay in his way he did not like not to be polite to it—there is a pervading quality of not at all Philistine common-sense which shows the best side of the Roman temperament. Although

Book I.: Elementary Education and Grammar.

Quintilian acknowledges the convenience of Greek for terminology, and makes fairly free use of the terms, it is quite evident that he has (long before he formulates it later) a profound and very wholesome distrust of the Greek rhetorical practice of splitting a thing up, naming the splinters, and then passing on, as if a real, solid, and final examination had been attained. And the same quality appears eminently in the summing up of his discourse on words, "Custom in speaking I shall call the agreement of the educated, as custom in living is the agreement of the good."

Books II.-VII. only relevant now and then.

Remarks on orthography follow, and some on reading, valuable, though not so valuable, as those on the same subject which come later. And then he passes to certain of the *progymnasmata* of the Greek rhetoricians, fables, uses, sentences, and "ethologies," which, though they have puzzled some, are clearly the same as the *ethopœiæ* of Hermogenes and his fellows.[1] All these are, in fact, exercises in composition. The rest of the book is occupied with the discussion of other subjects of the school curriculum, subsidiary to rhetoric. The second book continues the subject of Composition, but with more special reference to Oratory proper—a tendency which naturally increases; and for some five or six books the technicalities of the rhetoric-school and the courts have the better of literature. There are, however, two exceptions, which require notice—the first a remarkable passage[2] on reading or lecturing on authors.

"But"—he has just ruled out the explanation of the mere meaning of uncommon words as below the duties of a Professor of Rhetoric—"to point out the merits, and if it so happen, the faults, is the properest of all things for the profession and for the promise by which he holds himself out as a master of eloquence. . . ." (He should make the students read in turn, and then), "after setting forth the case on which the oration was composed (for thus it will be more clearly understood), he should leave nothing unnoticed which may be noteworthy in the invention or the elocution, pointing out the manner of conciliating

[1] For these technical terms *v. ante*, bk. i. chap. iv., or the Index.
[2] II. v. 5-9.

the jury in the proem, the clearness, conciseness, persuasive force of the narration, the occasional design and hidden artifice (for that alone is true art here, which can only be understood by an artist), what foresight there is in division, what subtle and thronging[1] argumentation, the strength of the inspiration, the attraction of the winning passages, the roughness[2] of the objurgation, and the humour of the jokes, how, finally, the man shows mastery of feeling, makes his way into the very heart, and adjusts the minds of the jury to his own contention Then, as for style, we must point out what words are proper, ornate, sublime, where the amplification is to be praised, what excellence there is in the contrary direction,[3] what is ingeniously transferred, what the figurativeness of the words is, how smooth and squared, yet manly, the composition." And then he proceeds to recommend the occasional selection of passages which are not to be praised—the exhibition, in short, of a rhetorical helotry.

How to lecture on an author.

No reader, I hope, will need to have it pointed out to him, at any great length, how exactly this corresponds to the practice of the critical lecturer or reviewer, as it ought to be, in regard to all kinds of literature, and not oratory merely. Such a lecturer, or such a reviewer, can do no better than grave these words of Quintilian on his mind, and follow their directions as best he can, whensoever an author is to be expounded on the platform or reviewed in the column. It scarcely requires more than the easiest and most obvious substitutions and amplifications to make the passage a manual in miniature of all criticism, be it of prose or poetry.

The other passage is the very curious and interesting section in the third chapter of the Sixth book, on Wit[4] As is well known, this is one of the points on which ancient (especially

[1] *Crebra*, as it were "attacking on all sides," "redoubling blows"

[2] *Asperitas*, which some would rather translate "trenchancy." But there was an idea in ancient times (not quite unknown in modern) that in hostile argument politeness ("treating your adversary with respect," as Johnson said) was out of place.

[3] *Quæ virtus et contraria*, that is to say, I suppose, brevity and pregnancy "Transferred" just below, in the sense of *translatio*, "metaphor," "what ingenuity of metaphor."

[4] *Virtus quæ risum judicis movet*, VI. in

Latin) and modern taste are most out of harmony. Except Aristophanes at one end, with his alternations of outrageous farce and keen poetry, and Lucian at the other, with the innocent-seeming flow of his white-hot irony, there are perhaps not even any Greek authors whose command of our risibility is absolutely sure; and the average Greek joke, as reported by the anecdote-mongers, is to us but a vapid thing. In Latin it is even worse. Plautus pretty generally, but in a limited way; Catullus, when he exchanges passion for humour; sometimes Horace, for a pleasant Augustan "wit of the town"; Martial for a too often naughty *persiflage*,—these we have little doubt about. But Terence, even if we shut our eyes to his borrowed capital, is but comedy-and-water; Cicero jokes without indeed much difficulty on his part, but with surprisingly little effect on ours; and the *average* Latin jest is far worse than the average Greek. Of course this is all natural enough; the jest always, save in certain transcendences, lies more in the ear of the hearer than the charm or quality of any other kind of literature. But it is all the more interesting and valuable to have a set discussion on the comic by a man of immense reading, excellent taste, and great acuteness. Besides, Quintilian's Spanish blood or birth may very likely have given him a somewhat wider and more flexible appreciation of humour than the "firm Roman" wit itself allowed, or at least encouraged.

Wit.

After mentioning, as a generally accepted thing, the deficiency of the comic element in Demosthenes, and the superabundant quantity and inferior quality of it in Cicero (it must be remembered that Quintilian had the Tullian *Three Books of Jests*, which time has mercifully hidden from us), he passes to the general question, and accepts the almost universal classical opinion that laughter has always something low about it.[1] In this, we know, Plato and Aristotle both agreed; it was a sort of postulate of all Greek philosophy, and though almost certainly false, was excused, partly by the extreme licence of the Comic Muse in ancient times, and partly by the rarity of humour in the best sense, and the almost non-existence

[1] *Hoc semper humile.*

of Romantic Comedy. He observes, however, acutely enough, on the insufficiency of the general explanations of the origin of laughter (an insufficiency which has certainly not been filled up to the present day), and shows that urbane shrewdness, which is one of his best points, by questioning whether deliberate cultivation of jesting as an art is an altogether satisfactory thing. But it is in his subsequent remarks on the kind of jesting admissible in oratory (we might here at least substitute, with hardly any wrong, "in literature") that his chief merit lies. On the dangerous business of verbal distinction between *venustum*, *salsum*, *facetum*, he is luminous and useful; while his remarks, in two different places, on *urbanitas* are not far from a *locus classicus*, and those[1] on the special treatise of Domitius Marsus on that topic have the best qualities of a review—that is to say, of the kind of review that one sees too seldom.

Book VIII.: Style.

It is not, however, till the eighth book is reached (for the seventh, except in some remarks on arrangement, is almost purely legal) that we find Quintilian, for a considerable time, at close quarters with our special subject. After summarising with remarkable clearness (so that there is nowhere any better conspectus, in little, of the matter) the earlier and technically rhetorical part of the *Institutes*, he comes to the third part, which he calls "elocution."[2] This is no other than the *lexis*, which Aristotle treats not indeed perfunctorily (it was not in Aristotle to be guilty of that crime), but with a sort of apologetic impatience, as one turning back to the Court of the Gentiles after visiting the Holy of Holies. The point of view, with some four hundred years of great work, not merely in oratory, but in general literature, behind the critic, and with the new requirement of comparison between Greek and Latin brought in, has changed remarkably. Instead of a popular and slightly vulgar appendix, it is (Quintilian tells us that all orators agreed with him) the most difficult

[1] §§ 101-112.

[2] Some moderns (notably Campbell in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*) have followed Quintilian in this use of the word for "style." But the accepted sense in English is too well settled for this to be permissible.

part of the subject. At the same time, he has not attained to the almost perfect *parrhesia* of Longinus; he dares not tell us (though we can see that he was sometimes half minded to do so) that "beautiful words are the light of thought." He has the stereotyped caution—very wholesome in its way—to those who neglect things and attend to words. But he will not allow words to be neglected in their turn, and as a matter of fact perhaps the greater, certainly the most interesting and original, part of the five books which follow is occupied with what, disguise itself as it may under the term of "elocution," is really "style." Not, be it added, the mere fritter and foppery which sometimes receives that name, but literary manner and art in the great and wide sense—the proper subject, that is to say, of literary criticism.

Perspicuity.

After this proem, Quintilian begins regularly on the subject —φράσις in Greek, *elocutio* in Latin—referring to his remarks in the first book (*vide supra*) on the avoidance of Barbarism and Solecism, and glancing at Livy's Patavinity, and at the alleged over-Atticism of Theophrastus. He has, however, a good deal more to say on the actual lexicon; and in the course of it sharply perstringes that sort of affected periphrasis which the eighteenth century (though it thought it knew its Quintilian) so dearly loved. "The Iberian shrub" for "broom," the "fishes solidified by brine" which he laughs at, are Thomson in his worst mood, Armstrong, Mason, even Wordsworth at times, to the very life, and Delille to more than the life—of which there is not much in that famous Abbé. The necessity of making the epithet fit the noun is excellently inculcated; the use of archaic technical terms not excessively denounced. But I grieve that Quintilian joins the herd in condemning Parenthesis, a heavenly maid whom there have been many and great ones, from Herodotus to De Quincey, to love, but whom few have dared to praise as she deserves. It is true that she speaks chiefly to the sapient; and the insipient accordingly do not love her.

Passing from perspicuity to "elegance," as our own eighteenth-century rhetoricians would have said, Quintilian is equally admirable; but, as before, a certain amount of "hedging" is

perceptible in him. True beauty, he thinks, is never separable from utility. It is a noble sentiment, and to a very large extent a true one; but it may be questioned whether the greatest part of its truth is not esoteric—whether it does not arise from the suppressed rider, "because true beauty, in merely being beautiful, *is* of the highest utility."

Elegance.

He himself, however, perhaps did not care to penetrate so far with his analysis; at any rate he does not, and so he rather beats about the bush. Grace of style will captivate; all the great men, Aristotle no less than Cicero, say that we ought to excite admiration. Only we must be "manly, sir, manly"; our embellishment must not be effeminate—it must be in good taste. The three kinds of oratory, too, will admit of different degrees—even different kinds of embellishment. Epideictic almost demands ostentation of ornament; debating sometimes permits it; it must be far more cautiously used in forensic speech. Even words must be most cautiously chosen—harshness, a touch of the ludicrous, and other effects, unless they are deliberately invited, must be carefully shunned. The archaic (from this point of view there is no real contradiction with the former, *v. supra*) will add picturesqueness, but we must walk warily with it, we must not say *antigerio* for *valde*. Here, perhaps, one may presume to differ with Quintilian, who extends his condemnation to the beautiful word *ærumna*. He may have been led to dislike it by that sensitiveness of his ear to the grunt of the "um," which we shall notice later, but which ought here to have been appeased by the musical syllables on either side.

Proceeding from individual words to connected speech, he has some capital cautions on unlucky conjunctions of words, suggesting double meaning — with, however, the still wiser reflection that if you are always looking out for this, you had better hold your tongue altogether. A handful of the rhetorical tickets—*tapeinosis*,[1] *meiosis*,[2] Homœology, Macrology, pleonasm, *cacozelon*,[3] and so forth—is taken up, and they are shaken out

[1] The use of undignified expression, as "a *wart* of stone" on a mountain.

[2] Not in its usual equivalence with *litotes*, but in the sense of cursory and elliptic reference.

[3] Affected excess in *any* direction, whether ornate or plain.

and shown to be at least susceptible of useful application, while in the passages that follow (the conclusion of the third chapter) some celebrated *loci*[1] are severally examined, with an admirable combination of verbal acuteness and general grasp. The shorter fourth chapter deals in the same way with the favourite figure of Amplification and its opposite Diminution, as exemplified in chosen illustrations. Then he turns (and we must remember that the turn is not arbitrary nor desultory, but follows the divisions of the older Rhetoric) to those sentences or *gnomæ*, as the Greeks termed them, which had such an effect on ancient audiences, and which, *mutatis mutandis*, are not without effect on modern readers. We have seen very recently how the mere trick of what may be called "topsy-turvyfying" accepted maxims has, not once or twice, but again and again, managed to secure an audience.

This section ends with a passage of such weight and importance as general criticism that we must give it nearly *in extenso*:—

"But there will be no end to it if I follow out individual forms of corrupt taste. It is better to turn to what is more necessary. There are two opposite opinions on this subject; some hardly pay attention to anything but 'sentences'—some utterly condemn them; and with neither do I entirely agree. If sentences are too crowded they get in each other's way, just as, with all crops and trees, nothing can grow to a proper size if it lacks room. Nor does anything stand out in a picture where there is no shading; so that artists, when they deal with many things in one canvas, leave spaces between them lest shade and object fall together. Moreover, this same profusion cuts the style too short; for each sentence stands by itself,[2] and there is, as it were, a fresh beginning after it. Whence the composition becomes too disjointed, consisting not of integral members, but of separate scraps, inasmuch as these things, each rounded and cut off from the rest, refuse conjunction.[3] Besides, the colour of

[1] Chiefly from Virgil and Cicero.

[2] *Subsistit:* or perhaps, "comes to a halt," "stops dead."

[3] *Insistere invicem nequeant:* or perhaps "are unable to lean upon each other," "to come close to each other," "to stand in each other's shoes."

the speech becomes, as it were, spotty with blotches, bright indeed, but too many and too different. For though a selvage and fringes of purple, in their proper place, light up the gown, a garment speckled with patches of colour is certainly unbecoming. Wherefore, though these sentences may seem to flash and to strike in some sense, yet they are lights which may be likened, not to flame but to sparks amid smoke: they are not even seen when the whole speech is luminous, as the stars themselves cease to be visible in sunshine. And, rising only with fitful and feeble effort, they are but unequal, and, as it were, broken, so as to attain neither the admiration due to things eminent nor the grace of a close uniformity" (VIII. v. 25-29).

Books VIII., IX.: Tropes and Figures.

The end of the Eighth book, and the beginning of the Ninth, deal with the subject—the all too famous and long-studied subject—of Tropes and Figures, which Quintilian distinguishes from one another a little artificially, and with a kind of confession that the distinction is sometimes correspondent to no real difference. It is not till rather late in his handling (IX. i. 22) that he makes that scornful reference to the Greek abundance in this kind which has been itself more than once referred to here. He is bound to say that figures are by no means so numerous as some would make them out. Nor have the names, which the Greeks can botch up at any occasion, the least influence with him.[1] And he is particularly earnest in condemning the practice of allotting a Figure to every affection of the mind—a practice certainly absurd enough, though no very unnatural consequence of the constitution of "figures" as real things.[2]

He himself, however, is by no means stingy of accepted Tropes and Figures, though he treats them, with his usual commonsense, as names, not things. The first place, in his discussion and enumeration of the matter, is occupied as usual by Metaphor, a mode of speech so prevailing in both senses that, here at

[1] *Neque enim me movent nomina illa, quæ fingere utique Græcis promptissimum est.*

[2] And, it may be added, pretty closely connected with the mania for insisting that literary criticism shall perpetually mix itself up with ethics and psychology.

least, no objection can be made to its constitution into a quasi-entity. He calls it "the most frequent and by far the most beautiful," points out, of course, that it is only Simile in another and shorter form, and illustrates its kinds by examples in the best critical style. He specifies these kinds; but once more *not* to distinguish for the mere sake of distinguishing. In fact, here as elsewhere, we may notice that Quintilian, half unconsciously, stops short at the points where Rhetoric parts company with literary criticism, and becomes mere pseudo-science. From Metaphor he goes, treating them in the same way, as with all the tropes and figures that he mentions, to Synecdoche, Metonymy, Hypallage; and has some good remarks on the fine but real distinctions between the indulgences in these flights and sleights which are, and those which are not, permissible to the orator, whom he practically identifies with the prose-writer by contrasting him with the poet. Antonomasia, which is of the same family, follows, and then a rather disappointing treatment of Onomatopœia. One sees here the Roman, and the late Roman, but also the yearner after better things, in the observation that "this, which the Greeks thought one of the greatest excellences, is scarcely allowed *us*." "We do not dare to form a new word," he says, and tells us that even the formation of such words, on strict analogy of others, was scarcely ventured on,[1] and that the inability to compound, which has so notoriously manifested itself later in her greatest daughter, was beginning to appear in Latin. In short, Latin had reached a stationary state —the state of the nation *qui cesse de prendre*, if not quite of that *qui commence à rendre*. It had to become the picturesque and delightful, if perhaps too much crossed and blended, Low Latin of the Dark and Middle Ages before it could recover itself.

Catachresis, Metalepsis, the ornamental and "perpetual" epithet follow; and then we come to the fruitful subject of Allegory.

Quintilian is perhaps not exactly the writer from whom we should expect a thoroughly satisfactory treatment of this great subject—a subject which, far more than metaphor, escapes the

[1] This famous horror of the *insolens*, the *inusitatum verbum*, is the very dominant note of all Latin criticism, and will recur constantly.

state of a mere rhetorical ticket, and challenges that of a real literary quality or kind Although it is unjust to represent him as merely conversant in details and afraid to rise, a certain timidity serves as the Nemesis of his common-sense Besides, his materials were not favourable the great allegorical style of Plato had long passed, not to be revived, the magnificent exuberance of mediæval fancy in this kind was far in the future, the exercises which Quintilian had before him were either mere phrases in the poets, tedious didactic things in the philosophers, or such easy examples as Horace's "O navis," which he quotes. We have therefore no such handling of the matter as we might have had from Longinus And when we are told that the most ornamental kind of writing by far is that in which the three figures—simile, metaphor and allegory—are mixed we seem to see the worst side of Rhetoric as we seldom do in Quintilian Once more there arises the picture of a dismal sort of library-laboratory, with bottles and drawers full of ready cold-drawn or ready short-cut figures—of the literary dispenser, with his apron on and his balance adjusted, taking a handful of this, two ounces of that three drachms of the other, and compounding a draught or a pill to be exhibited in the forum, or the lecture-room or the courts of justice, as the case may be But he recovers himself soon, if only by the dry fashion in which he observes that, if anybody does not know it, the Greeks call certain kinds of allegory sarcasm, asteism, antiphrasis, and parœmia, to which it may be well to add mycterism,[1] a kind of derision which is dissembled, but not altogether concealed—as very neatly by M Fabius Quintilianus in the passage before us

Periphrasis, Hyperbaton, Hyperbole close the chapter, and the book, and Quintilian shines on the latter, while at the end he refers to his lost dialogue *On the Causes of the Corruption of Eloquence*, one of the things of its kind which we must regret most

The Ninth book opens with the distinction between Trope and Figure,[2] and with some general remarks on the latter word which

[1] *I e*, suppressed sneering

[2] *Trope*=an expression altered from its natural and obvious *sense* *Figure* =an expression differing in *form* from the ordinary mode.

illustrate rather amusingly the Delilah-effect of it on those who use it. We should not have been sorry to have had that treatise of Apollodorus which Quintilian seems only to have known through Cæcilius (the writer on the Sublime), and in which the author by no means frivolously argued that, in the common sense of Figure, everything is a figure, and the enumeration of figures is impossible and useless. We should have thanked Time for sparing that other of the Homeromastix, in which Zoilus, with better sense apparently than when he talked of matters too high for him, limited the word Figure to a phrase, in which the apparent or first meaning is different from the second or real. And Quintilian himself, when he comes to the distinction between Figures of Thought and Figures of Speech, illustrates (whether purposely or not it is difficult to say) the purely childish side of the matter, by remarking that in one of the Verrines, *jamjam* and *liberum* are figures of speech. For, as the commentators have gravely worked it out, *jamjam* is a Palillogia or repetition, and *liberum*, contracted from *liberum*, is an instance of Syncope. Verily, one exclaims, there is much to be said for Apollodorus! And when he further observes that the greatest power of Figures is to render oratory attractive, one feels inclined to say, "The figure is nothing, and the power of making figures is less; but there *are* attractive qualities in oratory, and you may ticket them as figures, within moderation, as you like."

But it would be a delusion to suppose Quintilian himself deluded. Immediately after the passage just quoted comes his Declaration of Independence in regard to the Greek nomenclature, a fresh observation in the same key "to exhibit anger or grief, or any other passion in literature, is not of itself to be figurative, though one may use figures in the expression," and —after two quotations from Cicero, in which crowds of figures are introduced and named—a distinct, though gentle, hint that, much as he admires Cicero, he thinks him too prodigal here.

Two long chapters, the second and third of the Ninth Book, contain Quintilian's own survey of figures as distinguished from tropes, and as divided into figures of thought and speech respectively. He opens the first division with Interrogation—the

rhetorical interrogation, of course; he goes on to Anticipation (*prolepsis* in a sense different from the usual one); Feigned Doubt, Communication,[1] Feigned Passion, Prosopopeia, Apostrophe, Hypotyposis, and then regains more open and higher ground for a time with the great figure of Irony, of which, however, he makes relatively as little as of Allegory. Aposiopesis, Ethopœia, and Emphasis follow, with something to which he gives no definite name, but which approaches Parable. After this he becomes rather technically forensic, and winds up with a shower of names of the verbal hair-splitting kind.

Verbal figures—"Figures of Speech" proper—begin, after some general remarks, by examples which seem to bring us back to the old conclusion that "everything is a figure," and which are sometimes barely intelligible, as where *Sthenelus sciens pugnæ*, which seems to us a most ordinary expression, is said to show two figures combined.[2] The Figures themselves, where named distinctly, range from such familiar things as Parenthesis and Climax to more technical ones in Epanodos[3] and Paradiastole.[4] Others, familiar and less familiar, follow, but at last Quintilian grows impatient, and after plumply denying that Paromologia[5] and Parasiopesis[6] are figures at all, declares roundly that he shall pay no attention to authors who have made no end of mere term-seeking, and have classed arguments among Figures. And he winds up the whole with a weighty caution against abusing even those Figures which he has admitted. Of such abuse, almost all times, whether they have been devoted to nominated Figures or not, leave more than sufficient record: but it can never have been more tempting or more frequent than when the process of peppering style with the contents of a certified chemist's shop of Figures was almost prescribed by the orthodox curriculum of literary education.

The connection, however, with strictly literary criticism be-

[1] In the technical sense of "taking the audience into confidence," of asking the jury what *they* would do in such a case, &c.

[2] *Sciens* being used for *scitus* and *pugnæ* for *pugnandi*, and each use of one word for another being reckoned as one figure.

[3] Deliberate repetition.

[4] Antithetic distinction.

[5] Concession in order to strengthen argument.

[6] Pretended reticence, implying what is meant.

comes closer still in the following (fourth) chapter of the Ninth Book, which, together with the surveys of literature in the Tenth and Twelfth, is *the* "place" of Quintilian for our subject. For it deals directly with Composition, in the higher sense of attention to style, and before very long we see that what is immediately uppermost in Quintilian's mind at the moment is the order of the words, and the consequent rhythmical effect. He spends, after a fashion pardonable to the professional declaimer and teacher of rhetoric, some time on general remarks, rebutting the silly talk, common then as now, about the superiority of natural to artificial eloquence, the frippery of style, and the like. And then he mounts the battle-horse of all true critics, the argument from alteration of arrangement of words, adding, truly enough, that the more beautiful the sentence which is thus distorted, the worse will the distortion seem. He turns to an interesting and quite relevant historical digression on the lateness of deliberate style, and on its differences, narrowing these for the present to two, 'loose" and "firm," by which it would appear that he does not mean the usual contrast of "loose" and "periodic," but merely that between irregular conversational style and set speech. Then, noting the technical divisions of phrases, clauses, and sentences, he considers the order of words, and (being a Latin) of course urges the conclusion of the sentence with a verb, where possible, and perstringes certain sentences of Mæcenas, a notedly "precious" writer, in which we can only dimly perceive the offence.

Composition.

Remarks on emphasis, hiatus, cacophonous conjunction of consonants, jingle, plethora of monosyllables, and the like, follow, and then the great and difficult subject of rhythm is tackled directly. Distinguishing it from metre, correctly if not quite sufficiently, by the necessity that the latter should show a certain order, he proceeds to deal with the proper rhythm of prose in the most difficult, but not least important, passage of his book, rightly insisting in sum on the presence of *numbers*, which are not to be monotonous. Some of his minor directions are, indeed, dark to us, especially his objection, not merely in prose, but even in verse, to polysyllables at

Prose rhythm.

the end. And though we are in full light again when he denounces complete verses in prose (the chief formal fault of Mr Ruskin), he, here also, goes too far for us. The most delicate English ear would not object to the equivalent of Sallust's "Falso queritur de natura sua,"[1] to the commencement of a hexameter in the *Timæus*,[2] or to the muffled Galliambic of Thucydides.[3]

But this in the last case is, perhaps, due to the fact that the pæon is hardly an English poetic foot at all, and in the first to the fact that we have nothing corresponding to the strangely broken rhythm of the Latin comic senarius and tetrameter. It is, however, in dealing with the feet of prose that Quintilian, like Aristotle, gets most out of our depth, and for the same reason, that we really do not know enough—if we know anything—about the pronunciation, or intonation, of Greek and Latin. Yet the general drift, if here and there we do not quite "feel our feet," is unmistakable and unmistakably correct, and the whole is an excellent sample of a kind of criticism most necessary, much neglected in modern times till very recently, and entirely independent of any mere rhetorical technicality. And it is followed—at section 116 onward—by some general remarks of capital importance, laying down among other things that the chief touchstone of composition is the ear, and admitting that in many cases, both of selection of single words and *ordonnance* of phrases, it is impossible to render an exact reason why one thing is right and another wrong. It is so: and there's an end on't! In the peroration of the Book, first

[1] Said to be an iambic decasyllable—hobbling enough!

[2] Εἷς δύο τρεῖς· ὁ δὲ δὴ τέταρτος ἡμῶν ὃ φίλε. The first words to δὴ make the beginning of a hexameter or a penthemimer elegiac, the whole, omitting εἷς, a very "lolloping" iambic trimeter, while ὁ to ἡμῶν is an Anacreontic. Plato would certainly have retorted that where so many metres are possible no one can arise distinctly, and therefore disagreeably, to the ear.

[3] ὑπὲρ ἥμισυ Κᾶρες ἐφάνησαν. Spalding, I think, detected Galliambic cadence here, regarding the first foot as an anapæst and the rest as two third pæons. You may also begin with a third pæon (ὑπὲρ ἥμι), as do many of the lines of the *Attys* itself. Therefore I call it "muffled," and have dwelt on the pæon, though the Galliambic is more commonly thought of as Ionic *a minore*. Professor Hardie, however, suggests to me that Quintilian was actually thinking of the Sotadean metre of which he himself, lower in the chapter, quotes an example beginning rather like this.

the orator receives some special, and then (at 138 onward) the author, in verse as well as in prose, some general, cautions and admonitions as to musical effect.

But all this, good as it is, could be easily spared, if the choice lay between it and the Tenth book. For here, and here only, do we get, from an eminent critic of the first rank, a critical survey of the joint literatures of Greece and Rome, during the main classical course of both. Interesting as this would be from any one of tolerable ability, seeing that it is precisely what we lack—doubly interesting as it is from a man of Quintilian's learning, long practice in teaching, and interest in the subject—it becomes trebly so from certain characteristics of his which have been more than once glanced at, and which make him an almost perfect, certainly a typical, exponent in rational form of what may be regarded as the standard orthodoxy—the *textus receptus* of the critical creed—of the ancients. Aristotle came too early to give this opinion with full knowledge, and would, perhaps, always have been disinclined to give it in the same way. Longinus, we feel, is an exception of genius. But what Quintilian says the enormous majority of cultivated Greeks and Romans (allowing in the former case for particularist and parochial contempt of the latter) are likely to have thought. He prefaces the survey by an interesting, and perhaps not really equivocal, explanation of the reasons for its insertion. I say "perhaps not really equivocal," because Quintilian, a very genuine person, would not have hesitated to give it the form of an apology if he had meant it apologetically. The orator on his probation must, he says, study and imitate for himself all the best authors, not merely the orators themselves, but, as no less an authority than Theophrastus recommended, poets, and historians, and philosophers. But this must be done with care and judgment; for the methods of history are not the same as those of oratory, and it is no use addressing one kind of juryman with the pregnant terseness of Sallust, or another kind with the *lactea ubertas* of Livy, while the philosophers require the same caution, put in a different way. And some remarks of his on at least the more celebrated authors will be expected by

Book X.: Survey of Classical Literature.

his friends—to which friends we owe more thanks than is always the case.

He "begins with Zeus," that is to say, Homer, and delivers a very neat set criticism on him from that oratorical point of view which was so common in regard to both Homer and Virgil.

"For he, as," in his own words, "the violence of rivers and the courses of the springs take their beginning from the ocean, has given an example and a starting-point to all parts of eloquence. Him none has excelled, for great things in sublimity as for small ones in propriety of speech. At once abundant and compressed, agreeable and serious, wonderful now in volume, now in terseness, is he; and not only in poetical, but also in oratorical, virtue most eminent. For, not to say anything of his panegyrics, his hortatives, his consolations, do not the Ninth Book, with the embassy sent to Achilles, and the quarrel between the generals in the First, and the sentences expressed in the Second, set forth every device of advocacy and debate?" &c., &c.

Greek: Homer and other Epic poets.

Others he treats more briefly. Hesiod is in the middle style only, but easy and sententious in that. Antimachus[1] (one of our losses) is second to Homer, has force, energy, originality, but is deficient in attractiveness and in *ordonnance*. Panyasis (another) excels Hesiod in subject and Antimachus in treatment. Apollonius has an evenly sustained mediocrity. Aratus is "equal to the work to which he thought himself equal"—an ingeniously double-edged compliment. Theocritus (one must quote the whole of this, and waive the discussion of it) "is admirable in his peculiar style, but his rustic and pastoral muse shrinks not only from appearing in the forum, but even from approaching the city." And then Pisander, Nicander, Euphorion, Tyrtæus, Callimachus, Philetas are slid over rapidly, while, though Aristarchus had sanctioned three *iambographi*, Simonides and Hipponax are passed in silence, Archilochus only receiving very high praise for vigour and all similar qualities.

[1] *V. supra*, pp. 20, 85. Perhaps no single "windfall of the Muses" would be so great a gain to literary criticism, in respect of Greek, as the recovery of a substantial portion of Antimachus

So, too, of the nine canonical lyrists, Bacchylides, Ibycus, Anacreon, Alcman, and even Sappho, are overlooked. Pindar has a brilliant testimonial, to which, however, the authority of Horace seems to be thought necessary as an indorsement. Stesichorus is "equal to a great subject, strong, dignified, but exuberant." Alcæus is magnificent, but descends to sportive and amorous subjects (*ecce idola scholæ!*); and Simonides, though of no very lofty genius, is correct and pleasing.

The Lyrists.

The Old Comedy, with the usual three selected, but not characterised separately, is better adapted for the orator's use than anything save Homer: it is the cream of Attic; it is graceful, elegant (and one may wonder for a moment, but it is a useful warning as to the connotation of the word), "sublime." The judgment of the three tragedians is scarcely worthy of Quintilian. He speaks of Æschylus very much as a Frenchman, not in the times of utter ignorance, used to speak of Shakespeare. He is half silent, half enigmatic, on Sophocles; but he gives Euripides obviously heartfelt praise, and thinks him the most serviceable study of all for the orator. To which observations Aristophanes would pretty certainly have retorted (clothing the retort in language perhaps sadly lacking in decorum) that it was not very wonderful that the sophist should be useful to the rhetorician.

Drama.

Very high, too, is the praise of Menander. Indeed, as we have seen before, Menander held a much higher position with the ancients than, if we had more than fragments of him, he would, from those fragments, be likely to hold with the moderns. He is praised (almost in the very words) for his "criticism of life,"[1] and a tradition is mentioned that he was an orator as well as a poet. But whether this be the case or not, passages in his plays are cited as possessing all the charms of eloquence, and he is especially extolled for that presentation of character—*ethopœia*—which the ancients exacted from the orator even more than from the poet. Philemon is the other late comic mentioned, and though the taste of the age that preferred him is denounced as bad, he is admitted as a fair second.

[1] *Ita omnem vitæ imaginem expressit.*

Herodotus and Thucydides are of course put in front of the historians, and are contrasted fairly, though not with a great deal of penetration. Theopompus, Philistus, Ephorus, Callisthenes, and Timagenes are slightly mentioned: but Xenophon, somewhat to our surprise, is put off to the philosophers. Yet this is of itself a useful *datum* for our inquiry, when we think how low *we* should put Xenophon's contributions to philosophy (as distinguished of course from philosophical biography), how much higher even the rather dry annals of the *Hellenics*, how much higher still the agreeable miscellanies, and the pleasant didactic romance of the *Cyropædia*, and how far highest of all, the *Anabasis*, with its vivid realisation of action and scenery, and the narrative power which gives a romantic interest to the rather undeserved escape of a gang of mercenary filibusters.

The Historians.

Conscious, probably, that the comparison of them must be hackneyed, Quintilian does not dwell long on the Greek orators, even on that half of The Ten which he selects, and of the later speakers mentions only Demetrius Phalereus. He is much more enthusiastic about the philosophers, discerning "agreeableness" of style[1] in Aristotle, a judgment in which few of us who have groaned over the not indeed obscure, but hard and juiceless, language of the *Ethics* and the *Organon*, will quite acquiesce, while we might think it rather kind even for that which clothes the more popular matter of the *Politics*, *Poetics*, and *Rhetoric*. But it would not be easy better to recognise the mastery of Plato, "whether in acumen of argument, or in a certain divine and Homeric faculty of style." He rises far above mere prose, and seems instinct, not with human reason, but with a sort of Delphic inspiration. Xenophon at last receives due meed for his "unaffected delightfulness beyond the reach of affectation," and the "persuasive goddess that sits on his lips."[2] Perhaps Theophrastus may be a "little overparted" with "divine brilliance,"[3] though of

The orators and philosophers.

[1] *Eloquendi suavitas.* Cicero is equally complimentary, however, in speaking of his *flumen aureum:* and the charitable have thought that these qualities were discoverable in the lost *Dialogues.*

[2] Eupolis on Pericles.

[3] *Nitor divinus.*

course the epithet is a mere translation of the name Aristotle gave him.

When the critic approaches his own countrymen his words have, perhaps, an even greater interest. He begins of course with Virgil, and, as in duty bound, ranks him next to Homer, and nearer Homer than any one is near himself. Yet a suspicion crosses one's mind whether Quintilian was exactly enthusiastic about the elegant Mantuan, for he talks about his being "obliged to take more care,"[1] about his losing in the higher qualities, but finding compensations, &c.

Latin—Virgil.

So far so good. But what shall we say of this: "All others must follow afar off. For Macer and Lucretius are indeed to be read, but not for supplying phrase—that is to say, the body of style. Each is elegant in his own subject, but the one is tame and the other difficult" Now, as to Macer we know little or nothing; he seems to have been a sort of Roman Armstrong or Darwin, who wrote about herbs, drugs, &c.[2] But Lucretius—a greater master of phrase than Landor himself, nay, a greater, perhaps, than Milton—"not good for supplying" it, and merely "difficult"? One wants, again, some Aristophanic interjection. Varro is damned with faint praise as not indeed despicable (*non spernendus quidem*), but *parum locuples.* Ennius is spoken of as some of our own critics used to speak of Chaucer—as a gigantic and aged oak, venerable but not beautiful. Ovid is "wanton," and too fond of his own conceits. Valerius Flaccus is a great loss. Others—Severus, Bassus, Rabirius, Pedo[3]—names to us

Other epic and didactic poets.

[1] *Ei fuit magis laborandum.*

[2] His fragments in Baehrens's *Poetæ Minores*, vol. vi. pp. 344, 345, run to seventeen, none exceeding two lines, and only two so long. The most complete is this—

"Cygnus in auspicus semper lætissimus ales
Hunc optant nautæ, quia se non mergit in undis."

This is certainly not much better than *humilis*, "tame" in phrase.

[3] Of Cornelius Severus, a friend of Ovid, who wrote on the Sicilian war, and of whom Quintilian thinks that, had he lived, he might have been second to Virgil, we have some dozen odd lines, and a more solid fragment of twenty-five, enshrining that plagiarism from Sextilius Ena which has been noticed above (p. 235). It has some merit. For Saleius Bassus see above (p. 281) The five scraps which we possess of Rabirius warrant no judgment. But Seneca the Rhetorician

mostly, though we have fragments of at least three, are dismissed, the two first with high praise, the two last with the scarcely enthusiastic remark that the orator may read them, if *he has time*. Lucan[3] is ardent, eager, and of noble sententiousness, but rather an orator than a poet. Domitian would have been the greatest of poets, *if* the gods had pleased. But, unluckily, they did not please!

Elegiac and miscellaneous.

In elegy Tibullus is Quintilian's choice, but he admits that others prefer Propertius. Ovid is more luxuriant than either; Gallus harsher. Horace receives praise thrice over as terse, pure and just in satire, bitter in iambics (lampoons), and almost the only Roman deserving to be read[1] in lyric—where he sometimes soars. He is full of pleasant grace, and is agreeably audacious. After this, or rather before it, it is not surprising that Catullus is only mentioned for "bitter" iambics. As older satirists ("Satire is *ours!*" says Quintilian with a pleasant patriotic exaltation), Lucilius and Varro have praise.

Drama.

The remarks on Tragedy we are unfortunately unable to check; but it is interesting that Quintilian apparently thought Latin better off here than in Comedy, which we certainly should not have expected. He quotes the traditional praise of the language of Plautus without expressing any opinion on it, but in a fashion pretty clearly intimating that he was unable to agree.[2] "The ancients extol Cæcilius,"—another phrase which can only be pointed in one way; and Terence, though extremely elegant in his kind, scarcely attains to a faint image of Greek. It seems, however, as if he would have thought better of Afranius had it not been for that foulness of subject which, from the frequency of mention of it in connection with the author, seems to have turned the by no means squeamish stomach even of less moral Romans.

in a context noticed above (p. 234), has preserved a block of twenty-three lines of Albinovanus Pedo on the voyage of Germanicus, which have a certain declamatory vigour. See Baehrens, vi. 351-356. (Some elegies have also been attributed to Pedo.)

[1] *At Lyricorum idem Horatius fere solus legi dignus.*

[2] *In comœdia maxime claudicamus: licet Varro, Musas (Ælii Stilonis sententia), Plautino dicat sermone locuturas fuisse, si Latine loqui vellent.*

He is much more patriotic in regard to History—in fact, his patriotism rather outruns his discretion. One may have the highest admiration of Sallust's masterly sweep ("immortal velocity" Quintilian himself calls it), of his pregnant thought and vivid representation, yet hesitate to match the two miniatures or Kit-cats of the *Jugurtha* and the *Catiline* against the mighty grasp and volume, alike in whole and in detail, of the *Peloponnesian War*. It must, however, be remembered that Sallust wrote a larger *History* in four books, which is lost except in fragments. Livy with Herodotus, though Quintilian thinks the latter ought not to feel indignant at the match, is only not so *impar congressus*, because there is here no unequality in scale and range. But, once more, the expression of opinion is a valuable one, and we must come back to it. Of Servilius Nonianus and Aufidius Bassus we know nothing; but the section ends with a high and most interesting panegyric on a certain unnamed living historian, whom we must all hope, though some would identify him with Pliny, to be Tacitus. If *he* had been equalled with even the greatest of the Greeks, Thucydides might have made room for him with hardly condescending good-humour.

History.

Having thus put himself in the mood of "our country right or wrong" by this time, Quintilian is emboldened to match Cicero against any Greek orator, though he proceeds to explain that this is not meant to depress Demosthenes. Thus minded, he certainly does not go to work "with a dead hand," as the French say, and endows his favourite not merely with the energy of Demosthenes, but with the flow of Plato and the sweetness of Isocrates. (One may invoke the aid of Echo—courteous nymph—and assent at least to Isocrates.) And then he passes to other Latin orators, praising Pollio for pains, and Messala for an aristocratic elegance. Cæsar (it is noticeable that he says nothing of the *Commentaries*) has qualities in his speeches which might have made him a rival to Cicero, especially the elegance of his diction. Cælius for wit; Calvus for severe correctness; others for other things, receive homage.

Oratory—Cicero.

In Latin philosophy he again, with some rashness, advances

Cicero as a rival to Plato, and ends with a curious and interesting passage on Seneca, whom he had been supposed to condemn and even hate, whose vitiated taste he still reprehends, but to whose real merits he now makes handsome concessions. This is quite one of Quintilian's best "diploma-pieces" as a literary critic, in the division of decided but not illiberal censure, qualified by just and not grudging allowance for merits. It is a pity that it is too long to quote.

Philosophy—Cicero and Seneca.

With the rest of the book, interesting as it is and germane to our subject, we must deal more succinctly. It first handles Imitation of the styles just run through, and contains some of the best advice available anywhere on that head. The danger of imitating one style is especially dwelt upon, and Quintilian draws nearer to Greece or England than to Rome, in the simple observation that he has known Ciceronians think themselves quite accomplished when they ended a sentence with *esse videatur*. *Habemus criticum!* Another most excellent chapter is devoted to Writing—that is to say, to "exercises in composition," which, under the dispensation of Rhetoric, were much in use. We know that Cicero wrote theses at the moment, and on the subject, of his sorest trouble. Quintilian's advice here again is excellent; and if it were worse, it would be saved by the delightful story he tells of Julius Florus, a Gaulish provincial (for literary talent was beginning to be centrifugal), who, to his nephew and Quintilian's friend Julius Secundus, when he was troubled about his style, observed, "Do you want to write better than you can?" Nor should the subsequent observations on rough copies be passed over. The rough copy is the superstition of those who wish to write better than they can. In some respects, and especially for the urbane, intimate, un-Philistine common-sense of it, this is one of Quintilian's best chapters. He follows it up by a short one on Correction, wisely observing that we may indulge in that too much; by another on Translation, dedication-writing, and so forth; by yet another on premeditation, and by a last on speaking extempore, which he says (irrefutably from his oratorical point

Minor counsel of the Tenth Book.

of view, and perhaps not much less so from the point of general literature) is all but a *sine qua non*. In these later chapters he is, as we may say, pursuing the art of the critic the reverse way—that is to say, he is counselling the author now to anticipate the critic. But it ought to be needless to add that they are not the less important as chapters of a manual of criticism itself.

Books XI., XII.: The styles of oratory.

The Eleventh book is wholly professional, dealing with the manner and general conduct appropriate to the orator, the cultivation of the memory, delivery, gesture, and so forth. It therefore yields us nothing, while the beginning of the Twelfth, with its respectable paradox that a good orator must be a good man, may not look more promising, nor the subsequent demonstration that he ought to be acquainted with the civil law, and with examples and precedents, that he must have firmness and presence of mind, years of discretion, and also reasonable fees and retainers, that he must study his brief, not lay himself out too much for mere applause, and while preparing carefully, be ready with impromptus and extempore speech when necessary. But when we are beginning to get a little weary of this good-man-of-the-Stoics, called to the bar, an abrupt turn to the style of oratory refreshes us. The sketch of literature in the Tenth Book had been made, it is to be remembered, from a somewhat different point of view; it had been occupied with the authors whom an orator should read, and the qualities which were to be discovered in them. Here the standpoint changes, and the literary quality of what the orator himself is to produce is the question. After a distinctly interesting parallel from painting and sculpture, to illustrate differences of style, Quintilian takes up these differences, in some cases repeating the descriptions of Book X., in reference to Latin orators, and especially renewing his eulogy of Cicero as excellent in every oratorical quality. This, however, he admits, was by no means the universal opinion, either of Cicero's contemporaries or of succeeding critics. And he hits a distinct blot in too much literary criticism by pointing out that while these earlier critics usually censured the great Ar-

pinate as too flowery, too Asiatic, too fond of jests, his, Quintilian's, own contemporaries were apt to speak of him as dry and wanting in succulence. Next he turns to the three famous divisions of oratorical style — Attic, Asiatic, and Rhodian: the first chastened, energetic, correct; the second redundant and flowery; the third a mixture of the other two. And then, with his usual unpretending shrewdness, he proceeds to point out that although there certainly *is* an Attic style, and this style is far the best, yet that there are many, nay, infinite varieties and subdivisions of it—that Lysias is not in the least like Andocides, Isocrates different from either, Hyperides apart from all three. And so, with perfect good sense, he objects to the limitation of the "odour of thyme," the Attic charm, to those who "flow as a slender stream making its way through pebbles"—that is to say, to those who write in a studiously correct and elegant style, with no magniloquence or turbid rush.

"Atticism."

More interesting still, because it is the first and by far the best thing of the kind that we have, is the passage which follows on the oratorical—we may excusably read the "literary"—qualities of the Latin language as compared with the Greek. There are, it is true, phonetic difficulties here, and probably no wise man will pretend to understand Quintilian's praise of the "sweetness" of the Greek *phi*, as compared with the harsh repulsiveness of the Latin *f* and *v*. No one but a student of phonetics themselves (that is to say, of a science as arbitrary as the most technical part of the Hermogenean rhetoric) can perceive any difference between *phi* and *f*, or the repulsiveness of the latter and of *v*, or the extra harshness of *fr* as in *frangit*. *Fr*, to a modern English ear, gives a very harmonious sound indeed. He incidentally, however, as far as *v* is concerned, gives us a "light" by saying that the sound of the digamma was preserved in *Servus* and *Cervus*, so that the Romans adopted the Wellerian form in these words; and has a specially interesting observation (because it applies equally to Anglo-Saxon) on the ugliness of terminations in *m*, "like the lowing of an ox," as opposed to the clear ringing Greek *n*. The intonation of Latin

Literary quality of Greek and Latin.

he also thinks inferior to Greek, and still more the vocabulary. But *sursum corda!* after all:—

"Wherefore, if any demand from Latins the grace of Attic speech, let him give us the same sweetness of utterance, and an equal abundance of words. If this be denied, we must match our meaning to the words we have, nor mix a too great subtlety of matter with words too strong, not to say too stout, for it, lest the combination lose either excellence. The less the mere language helps us, the more we must reinforce ourselves by invention of matter. Let us extract sublime and varied meanings. Let us stir all the passions, and illuminate our addresses with gleaming metaphor. We cannot be so graceful; let us be more vigorous. We are conquered in subtlety; let us prevail in weight. *They* are surer of propriety, let *us* overcome by numbers. The genius of the Greeks, even in their lesser men, has its own ports; let us spread more ample sail and fill it with a mightier breeze. Nor let us always seek the deep; we must sometimes follow the windings of the shore. *They* may slip over any shallows; let *me* find a deeper sea in which my bark may not sink."

A very little farther[1] and we find Wordsworth's paradox in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*—that there is no natural eloquence but in the speech of ordinary folk—anticipated, stated, and very happily and thoroughly answered, though in reference to prose, not verse; and after this, some interesting further observations on *sententiæ*—deliberate and ostentatious sententiousnesses.

Later still he returns upon himself, and adopts a fresh threefold division into ἰσχνὸν or plain; ἁδρὸν or grand; and ἀνθηρὸν or florid, examples of each of which, with oratorical adaptations, he proceeds to give, perorating on plain and florid style, in a manner not unworthy of his precepts. He concludes with a sort of postscript on the necessity of the orator's withdrawing before his natural force is abated, and thus leads, by a not ungraceful parable, to his own *Finis*.

It may be hoped that the above analysis, however jejune and imperfect, of this remarkable book will at least serve as a

[1] XII. x. 40.

basis for some intelligible, if brief, remarks on its position and value in the history of literary criticism. Its *status* as a document of this is, like that of all other ancient documents without exception (even the Περὶ Ὕψους cannot rank as completely exceptional), an indirect one, one of but partial relevance to the gospel of criticism. The Law of Rhetoric was but a schoolmaster, teaching, like all good schoolmasters, many things which had no absolute bearing on the future life of its pupils. And it is all the more curious that Quintilian should nevertheless give us so much that is of direct importance, because he is *not* merely a literary critic at intervals, but almost a literary critic *malgré lui*. Except in the case of Cicero, where his professional feeling comes in, he displays no very great enthusiasm for literature. He is never tempted, as not merely Longinus, but even Dionysius, is, to take a particular author, book, piece, and thoroughly analyse him and it, to grasp it, turn it lovingly inside out, hold it up to the admiration of others, deck it with the ornament, and adore it with the incense, of his own. His interest, though liberal, is just a trifle utilitarian. He holds, like Scott's counsellor, that "a lawyer without history or literature is a mere mechanic," and he studies both accordingly; but his study is mainly a means to an end. He may not be exactly insensible to the pure beauty of literature in and by itself; but it may be suspected that, if he spoke of it freely, he would speak in much the same tone that he uses in an odd passage[1] about working in the country, where he thinks the beauty of tree and flower, the song of birds, the sound of streams, likely to distract rather than to inspire. The prose of the Roman nature, its business-like character, its matter-of-factness, all betray themselves a little in him.

Quintilian's critical ethos.

It is therefore not wonderful that he embodies for us, in a very edifying fashion, that distrust of the Romantic which appears so often, if not so constantly, in the post-Homeric classical ages, up to his own time, though soon after it was to break down in writers like Apuleius. We saw that if he did

[1] X. iii. 22-24. It is natural to compare this with the remarks of Aper and Maternus in the *Dialogus*.

not absolutely dislike or despise, he ignored the romantic element in Xenophon, that the "seizing" situation of the Ten Thousand, leaderless though victorious, a handful isolated in the heart of a hostile country, the moving accidents of their journey across the mountain walls and through the warlike clans of Kurdistan, and all the rest, till the sight of the sea, and the rush to the hill-brow to behold it, and the shout of welcome—even though the incident be as rhetorical a thing as history and literature contain—pass entirely unnoticed by him. His astonishing dismissals of Lucretius (though he may have been prejudiced by Cicero[1] there) as merely "difficult," of Catullus as merely "bitter," group themselves with this very well. The grim force of the Lucretian despair, which would so fain persuade itself to be scientific acquiescence in contemplation from the temples of the wise, the throb of the Catullian passion, are not his business. Indeed, what *contio*, what *judices*, would pay any attention to the drift of the atoms in the void? what respectable paterfamilias but must highly deprecate verses, not merely immoral but extravagant, to Ipsithilla and Lesbia, attempts to reproduce, in sober Latin, the Greek ravings of a Sappho or about an Attis? Apollonius Rhodius, too, who to us seems a Romantic before Romanticism, touches no chord in Quintilian's breast. And we may be tolerably certain that the chords which were not responsive in the breast of Quintilian were at least equally mute in other breasts of his time.

But these shortcomings are not only inevitable, they are, for the purpose of the historian, almost welcome. We may protest as lovers, but we register and interpret as students. Moreover, Quintilian, like all the greater men in all periods, and some even of the smaller in some, supplies us with a great deal of matter for registration and interpretation, without any protest at all. In the first place, we see in him the gradual deflection or development (whichever word may be preferred) of Rhetoric into pure Literary Criticism, assisted by the practical disappearance of symbouleutic oratory, by the degradation of epideictic, and by the practical Roman contempt for mere technicalities,

[1] This remark is, of course, made subject to the uncertainties referred to above (p. 214 *sq.*)

unless, as in the case of law, they are intimately and almost inextricably connected with some practical end. It would be possible, as we have seen, by a process of mere "lifting out," with hardly any important garbling of phrase, to extract from the *Institutions* a "Treatise on Composition and Critical Reading" which would be of no mean bulk, of no narrow range, and would contain a very large proportion of strictly relevant and valuable detail. And this treatise would be illuminated—for practically the only time, in the range of ancient literature on the subject, to any considerable extent—by that searchlight of criticism, the comparative method; while it would also display, throughout, the other illuminative powers of wide reading, sound judgment, and an excellent and by no means merely pedestrian common-sense.

We may regret, indeed, as we have regretted already, that these good gifts were not turned to the business of direct literary examination of particular books and authors, after the fashion of Dionysius; but it is quite evident why they were not. And their actual use has resulted in passage on passage, in chapter on chapter, of the most precious material. Quintilian can only be despised by those who consider themselves defrauded if critics do not attempt the *meteorosophia* of the highest æsthetic generalisations. It is, on the other hand, certain that these airy flights, in this particular matter, have too often had the ultimate Icarian fate, and have not often met even with the temporary Icarian success. The "high priori way" has never led to any permanent conquest in literary criticism; and it is never likely to do so, because of the blessed infinity and incalculableness of human genius. It has constantly led that genius into deserts and *impasses*. Even things that look like generalisations firmly based on actual experience have to be cautiously guarded, and put forth merely as working hypotheses. You make, with the almost superhuman compound of learning and reason belonging to an Aristotle, a general theory of Poetry, and a special one of Tragedy, which require, and command, almost universal agreement. In a few hundred years there drops in a graceless sort of prose tale-tellers, who by establishing, slowly and uncertainly at first, but after a couple of thousand years

unmistakably, the kind of prose fiction, sap the very foundations of your theory of poetry. Later still arises a more graceless sort of strolling actors, ne'er-do-weel university men in England, cavaliers or shavelings in Spain, who in the same way bring it about that your theory of tragedy has to acknowledge itself to be only a theory of one kind of tragedy.

The other way is the way of safety; and if it be objected that it is the way of plodders only, one could undertake to make a very striking company of plodders from Longinus to Mr Arnold, who, sometimes not quite wittingly or willingly, have done all their best work in it. It would be but re-summarising our summary to point out once more, in any fulness, what work Quintilian has done. He has given us a history in little of the choicest Greek and Latin literature; he has drawn and placed for us the contrasted styles, not merely of oratorical, but of all prose composition; he has handled the literary side of grammar with singular fairness and sense; and has dealt more satisfactorily—to us at least—than any other ancient writer with the all-important and most difficult question of euphony in written speech. No one among ancient writers has treated the important but delusive subject of the Figures with more sense and skill; no one has contrived to get, out of some of the merest technicalities of the Rhetoric of the Schools, such a solid extract of critical power. The technical observations in Book X., which for want of space we passed over rapidly, form the most invaluable *Introduction to Composition* to be found in any language; they put our modern books of the kind to shame, at once by the practical character of their suggestions, and by their freedom from mere mechanical arbitrariness of prescription on points where idiom, good usage, and individual ability are really the only arbiters. And lastly, on the all-important and ever-recurring battle of the styles, Plain and Ornate, Attic and Asiatic, or whatever antithesis be preferred, it would be almost impossible to find a more intelligent pronouncement than Quintilian's.

He can therefore afford to smile at those who say that he *chancelle sur le terrain des principes*,[1] and to reply that *terrain*

[1] Théry, *op. cit.*, i. 207. I venture to think that Mr Nettleship also is not quite just to Quintilian.

is exactly the word which does not apply to the principles with which he is reproached for not dealing. The only reproach to which he *is* perhaps open is one which all antiquity, from Aristotle to Longinus, and including both these great men, shares with him. This is the reproach of never completely clearing up the mind about Rhetoric, and of perpetually confusing it with the Art of Prose Literature, or else leaving prose literature without any "art" at all. We have seen, long ago, how this confusion arose, and how it was maintained by conditions which, though working more feebly in Quintilian's days, were still working. The matter came to a head (though, oddly enough, the person chiefly concerned seems not quite to have understood it) when Lucian formally renounced Rhetoric and took to essay-writing in dialogue, when Apuleius in the *Golden Ass* mingled declamation, dialogue, philosophy, and romance in one *olla podrida*, with a daring sauce of new prose style to make it go down. But the barbarians were then at the gates; and the real recognition and reconstruction was not to take place for ages later, if it has completely taken place even yet.

CHAPTER IV.

LATER WRITERS.

AULUS GELLIUS: THE 'NOCTES ATTICÆ'—MACROBIUS: THE 'SATURNALIA' — SERVIUS ON VIRGIL — OTHER COMMENTATORS — AUSONIUS — THE 'ANTHOLOGIA LATINA'—THE LATIN RHETORICIANS—RUTILIUS LUPUS, ETC.—CURIUS FORTUNATIANUS. HIS CATECHISM—MARIUS VICTORINUS ON CICERO—OTHERS—MARTIANUS CAPELLA.

THE period from Nero to Hadrian is not merely the central and most important period of Latin criticism, but it contains a proportion altogether disproportionate of the bulk as of the value of Latin contributions to the subject. We must, however, complete our view of that subject, before summing up its general characteristics, with another chapter surveying the yield of the second, third, and fourth—perhaps, in view of the uncertainty of date of Martianus, we should add the fifth—centuries. The crop, if not very abundant, or of the very greatest value, is neither very scanty nor very uninteresting. It shall consist, in the specimens of it which we can afford to examine, first of the two famous and by no means unamusing miscellanists, the authors of the *Noctes Atticæ* and the *Saturnalia;* then, by an easy transition, of the commentators and scholiasts represented by their prior Servius, himself an interlocutor in the Macrobian symposium; in the third place, of a poetical contingent, much less important indeed than that furnished by the satirists from Horace to Martial, but not quite insignificant; and lastly, of the technical rhetoricians, ending with one of their latest representatives, but perhaps the most interesting of all, Martianus Capella. The chapter will thus, at least, not lack variety.

It would be difficult to have a better example of the indisposition of the Latin mind towards literary criticism proper, than that which is afforded by the famous *Noctes Atticæ* of Aulus Gellius.[1] We know nothing of this good person except that he was probably of more or less pure Roman descent, that he probably lived for the most part of his life at Rome and at Athens in the early second century, that he was a friend of Herodes Atticus, probably knew Plutarch, and was extremely intimate with, and a great admirer of, the rhetorician Favorinus. The well-known miscellany which he has left us, and which, in purporting to give the results of study or conversation in an Attic country-house, has been for seventeen hundred years so fruitful in imitations—mother, indeed, of a family sometimes a great deal fairer than herself—is an amusing book and a valuable, because it preserves for us a great number of quotations from lost authors or books, because its farrago of matter is good pastime, and not least because of a certain Pepysian or Boswellian quality in its author. But though, amid its jumble of things ethical, physical, logical, legal, and, above all, philological, perhaps the larger part is occupied with literature or at least with books, it is quite astonishing how small is the proportion that can be called literary criticism, and how rudimentary and infantine even that small proportion is. Gellius had nearly all the qualities and acquirements of the dictionary-maker; he was interested in etymology, was a most exact and careful purist in the definition and usage of words, and evidently prided himself on his collections of illustrative phrases and passages.[2] But almost invariably it must be said of him that *hæret in litera*, or, if he escapes that adhesion, that he gives himself over to the substance and meaning, not to the literary form and art, of what he quotes and studies. In all the nineteen or twenty books of his work there are probably not nineteen or twenty pages of real literary criticism; and where he does give us any it is of the "strawiest"

Aulus Gellius: the Noctes Atticæ.

[1] Ed. Hertz, 2 vols., Leipsic, 1886.

[2] Cf. the amusing chapter (vi. 17) in which he tells with innocent pride how he overwhelmed *quempiam grœculum* with apt citations on the word *obnoxius*. Gellius is not the only critic who has allowed parallel passages to choke his critical faculties, or has endeavoured to make up by the former for the absence of the latter.

character. Take, for instance, his comparison (II. 23) of the Greek and Latin comic writers, and especially of some passages of Cæcilius with their originals in Menander. In preferring the Greek he is, of course, quite right, but it is noteworthy that he can hardly render any specific reason for his preference. He says, vaguely if truly, that the Latins seem low and sordid beside the wit and brilliancy of the Greeks, that Cæcilius appears stupid and frigid by Menander. But as to detail he prudently adds, *nihil dicam ego quantum differat*, and, less prudently transgressing this rule later, confines himself wholly to the matter, accusing the Roman of leaving out a *simplex et verum et delectabile* remark of the Greek. And if he comes a little nearer in praising (or making his favourite Favorinus praise) the *flavum marmor* of Ennius, it is still pretty clear that he does this merely or mainly from the side of the dictionary-maker, pleased at getting a light on the exact meaning of *flavus*. Although to our ears his preference (VI. 20) of "Ora" to "Nola" (in the passage which Virgil is said to have altered from a rather petty spite to the Nolans), "because it makes a sweet hiatus" with *Vesevo* at the end of the preceding line, may seem all wrong, the principle is æsthetic if the application is not. But, as a rule, we shall find that his critical opinions, where they are not concerned with purely verbal matters, are always decided by moral, philosophical, or in some other way extra-literary considerations. Even in an extremely interesting passage towards the end (XIX. 9) where he makes *Græci plusculi* attack the Spanish-Latin rhetor Antonius Julianus[1] on the score of the inferiority of Roman to Greek erotic poets, and gives the passages with which Julianus retorted, the chief interest

[1] This Antonius Julianus, from another notice (XX. 9), seems to have been a person of slightly florid but by no means bad taste. For Gellius tells us that he used to say his ears were delighted and caressed by the coined words in the first mimiambic of C. Matius,* such as *Columbulatim* which is certainly not a little charming and very Catullan. After all, the famous advice to regard and avoid an unusual word, *tanquam scopulum* (which, by the way, Gellius gives us), is fatal to poetry.

* The fragments of this author may be found either in the sixth volume of Baehrens's *Poetæ Latini Minores*, or in the appendix to Otto Crusius's edition of Herondas (Leipsic, 1898). He has another word which Herrick might have Englished, *albicasci*.

for us is that even the Greeks except Catullus to some extent, and Calvus, from their censure. For there is little or nothing but logomachy to be got out of the condemnation of Hortensius as *invenustus* and Cilna as *illepidus*.

This same imputation of logomachy is hard to clear from the dispute in x. 3, whether, though Caius Gracchus is undoubtedly *fortis et vehemens*, it is or is not intolerable that he should be deemed *severior*, *amplior*, *acrior*, than Cicero. If Gellius had kept to the same words, and had said *fortior* and *vehementior*, the observation just made might seem unkind; but as it is, one seems to be dropping into the well-known jargon of our own times, and of all times, to be hearing one reviewer asserting that Johnson is "alert" and another replying that Thompson is "nimble," or opposing the "poignancy" of Smith to the "swiftness" of Brown. But the attention to words certainly comes in better when the critic objects to the use, in an otherwise *non sane incommode* adapted version from Euripides by Ennius, of *ignobiles* and *opulenti* for ἀδοξοῦντες and δοκοῦντες. XII. 2, however, is a good *locus* for us in more ways than one. It opens with a sketch of the difference of opinion about Seneca in the age succeeding his own, a difference of which Quintilian had, a little earlier, given us an inkling. "Some," says Gellius, "think of him as of a most unprofitable writer, one not worth reading, because they hold his style vulgar and hackneyed, his matter and opinions distinguished either by inept and empty haste (*impetu*) or by frivolous and Old-Bailey (*causidicali*) wire-drawing, his erudition vernacular and plebeian, and possessing nothing either of the dignity or the grace of the classics. Others, while not denying that he has little grace of phrase, maintain that his matter lacks neither information nor teaching power, and that he has no unhappy gravity and severity in castigating vice." He himself will give no general censure, but consider Seneca's opinion of Cicero and Ennius and Virgil. This "consideration," according to his wont, is rather a string of quotations with objurgatory epithets than a regular criticism. One may not agree with Seneca or one may (there are certainly some who would indorse his confession and avoidance of Cicero's faults in

the words *non ejus sed temporis vitium*). But the words which Gellius himself uses—*insulsissime, homo nugator, inepti et insubidi*[1] *hominis joca*—surely require some little argument to justify them, and this argument is what Gellius never gives. We may thank him, however, for the criticism as well as for the anecdote preserved (xiii. 2) in the story of the meeting of the tragic poets Pacuvius and Accius at Tarentum, in the extreme old age of the former. Pacuvius had asked his young guest and craftsfellow to read his tragedy of *Atreus*, and, after the reading, praised it as sonorous and grand, but perhaps a little harsh and austere. "It is so," said the junior, "but I am not very sorry, for I hope to improve. It is the same in wits as in fruits: the hard and harsh mellow and sweeten, but those that are at first flabby, and soft, and moist, do not ripen but rot. I thought it best to have something in my genius for time and age to mitigate." A sound principle, though not quite a universal one, as one may see in studying a certain life-work which ranges from "Claribel" to "Crossing the Bar."

He is in his more meticulous moods when (xiii. 18) he accuses Plato of misquotation and Euripides of plagiarism; but a couple of chapters later a set discourse on euphony, starting from a saying of Valerius Probus, seems to promise well. Some one had asked Probus whether it was better to use the terminations *em* or *im*, *es* or *is*, for the accusative, where both occur. *Aurem tuam interroga*, said Probus, which is no doubt the conclusion of the whole matter. But his questioner, either foolish or dogged, asked how he was to do this, and Probus replied, "As Virgil did when he wrote *Urbisne invisere Cæsar* but *Urbes habitant magnas*." Nor are we sorry to hear that when the questioner still bored on, saying that he could not understand why one should be better in one place and another in another, Probus retorted, "*You* need not trouble yourself; it will do *you* no harm whatever you use." *Prope inclementer*, says Gellius ("Served him right," most of us will say). But he goes on to accumulate some other instances of this application of the rule of euphony, and perhaps here draws as near to true criticism as he ever does. Nor is he wrong, though he may be

[1] A Gellian synonym or variant for *ineptus*, not found in Augustan Latin.

fanciful, in deciding in regard to certain almost literal Virgilian imitations of Homer, that the Greek is *simplicior et sincerior*, Virgil *νεωτερικώτερος et quodam quasi ferrumine immisso fucatior*.[1]

He may strain the word again too much, when he bestows a page on the difference of *multis hominibus* and *multis mortalibus* (xii. 28), but he recovers esteem when in xiv. 6 we find him rejecting, not without contumely, contributions to his *Noctes* on the questions "Who was the first grammarian?" and "Why Telemachus did not nudge his bedfellow Pisistratus but kicked him?" &c., &c. *Properans reddidi*, says he, with the shudder one can fancy, though, to tell the truth, he does himself "something grow to" this kind of disease.

We may close this anthology of the Gellian criticisms with some account of one of the most elaborate — a discourse of Favorinus on Pindar and Virgil.[2] After quoting the Roman poet's traditional saying about himself—that he brought forth his verses as a bear does her cubs, licking them slowly and busily into shape—he points out that the facts exactly bear out the description, and that certain verses, not having undergone the process of licking, are very inferior to the others. Among these unlicked cubs, it seems, Favorinus would place the Etna passage. Even Pindar himself, whom Virgil followed, is, the critic thinks, *ipso insolentior tumidiorque* in the place; but Virgil's verse is such that Favorinus calls it "begun, not made." And, the two passages having been cited in full, he indulges in the following drastic verbal censure: "At the very beginning, Pindar, paying more attention to the truth, said what was the fact, and a matter of ocular demonstration, that Etna smoked by day and flamed by night. But Virgil, laboriously seeking noisy-sounding words, confuses the two. The Greek says plainly that fountains of fire are belched forth, and rivers of smoke flow, and yellow, curling volumes of flame are borne down to the shores of the sea like fiery snakes; but this fellow of ours, choosing to interpret *ῥόον καπνοῦ αἴθωνα* by *atram nubem*

[1] "Hobbledehoyish, and got up with inserted expletives." *Ferrumen*, a post-classical word, is almost exactly the French *cheville*.

[2] xvii. 10.

turbine piceo et favilla fumantem, makes a crass and clumsy mixture, and translates the κρουνοὺς of flames, both harshly and inexactly, into 'globes.' Again, when he talks of 'licking the stars,' he makes an idle and empty exaggeration. Nay, the phrase, 'emitting a black cloud of smoke full of pitchy whirlwinds and glowing ashes,' is bad style and almost nonsense.[1] For glowing things, quoth he, neither smoke nor are black; unless by an improper vulgarism he applies *candente*, not to glowing but to merely 'hot' ash. But when he talks of 'rocks and cliffs being belched and flung up,' adding immediately that they are 'melted, and groan, and are flung in handfuls into the air,' neither did Pindar write this, nor would anybody else think of saying it, and the thing is the most monstrous of all monstrosities."

The classical hatred of bombast and the classical propensity to "stick at the word" in criticism are both very well illustrated here; but we should hardly guess, from the sample, that there existed in classical times much power of grasping the literary and poetical merit of a passage as a whole. Virgil, if he had cared to defend himself, would, no doubt, have called attention to the Pindaric words, τέρας and θαῦμα, as justifying even "monstrosity" in his own expanded description, and have urged that this description was at least partly intended to indicate the terror and confusion of mind caused by so portentous a phenomenon.

But this absence of the synoptic grasp of æsthetic means, as applied to produce literary effect, is precisely what we notice most in the ancient criticism which has come down to us. And it may be added that it is also precisely what we should expect to follow from the limitations of the ancient Rhetoric. Grammar provided rules for the arrangement of words, and lexicography provided lists of them, with their authority and their use carefully ticketed; so here criticism was at home. Rhetoric provided lists of Figures with which a man could compare the passage before him. But there was no training in the process of simply "submitting to" this passage, interrogating oneself whether it exercised a charm or not, and then interrogating

[1] *Inenarrabile et propemodum insensibile.*

oneself further whether that charm was genuine, and what was its cause. After all, Gellius has, as we have seen, sometimes come near to the discovery of the true method, and that he loved literature there can be no doubt.[1]

Macrobius: The Saturnalia.

Nor, much later, shall we find things different with that favourite of the Middle Ages and of Dr Johnson's youth, Macrobius,[2] who, about the beginning of the fifth century, undertook a pendant to the work of Gellius. It is not surprising that the author, *qui ot nom Macrobes*,[3] should have been a favourite (for his commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* principally, no doubt) with the period between Darkness and Renaissance. He has precisely the "fine confused feeding" in the way of matter and manner that these ages loved; and they would not be likely to quarrel with him for his lack of the criticism which, as we shall see, they themselves hardly, in more than a single instance, relished or understood. But he certainly illustrates, even in a greater degree than Gellius, the small propulsion of the Romans and their vassals towards the proper subjects of this book. Once more we find that etymology, mythology, grammar, the *farrago* of the antiquary as distinguished from that of the literary enthusiast, of the philologist as opposed to the critic, receive ample attention. And, once more, what we are specially in quest of remains practically, if not entirely, unhandled.

There are few more striking *loci* in connection with this subject than the end of the first book of the *Saturnalia*. The guests have been talking mythology and etymology for some stricken hours, till at last a break occurs. Vettius Prætextatus, the host, has just ended a long mythological dissertation, to the admiration of everybody, when Euangelus (the irreverent humourist of the party) breaks in, with some amusement at the practice of citing Virgil as an authority. He supposes that the notion of making Latin poets into philosophers is an imitation of the Greeks, and hints that the process

[1] It may perhaps seem to those who know him well that he might have been allowed more space here; and certainly he gives plentiful material. But the individual importance of his items hardly requires more than representative treatment.

[2] Ed. Eyssenhardt. Leipsic, 1868.

[3] *Roman de la Rose*, l. 7.

is dangerous, since even Tully himself, who was as formal a professor of philosophising as of oratory, so often as he talks of the nature of the gods, or of fate, or of divination, injures the glory which he has got together through his eloquence, by his desultory handling of things. Symmachus, the scholar-statesman, rebukes this blasphemer gravely, observing that, as for Cicero, he is *conviciis impenetrabilis*, and may be left aside for the moment, but that he fears Euangelus has learnt his Virgil only as boys do, and thinks him only good for boys, with nothing higher in him. Euangelus is by no means abashed, and takes the offensive. It was all very well, he says, for us as boys to take Virgil at our master's valuation, but did not he himself pronounce himself far from faultless, inasmuch as he wished them to burn the *Æneid?* No doubt he was afraid, not merely of ethical blame for such scenes as the request of Venus to her lawful husband in favour of her illegitimate son, but of critical blame for his now Greek, now barbarous, diction, and for the awkward *ordonnance* of his work. To this, *cum omnes exhorruissent*, Symmachus, still calm and sententious, makes answer by putting Virgil beside Cicero, and saying of his glory, that as it can grow by no one's praise, so it is diminished by no one's abuse. Any grammarian, he continues, can refute these calumnies; and it would be a shame to ask Servius (the famous Virgilian scholiast, who is present) to take the trouble. But he should like to know whether, as Euangelus is dissatisfied with Virgil's Poetic, he likes his Rhetoric better. "Oh!" says Euangelus, "you have made him a philosopher, and now you are going to make him an orator, are you?"

A conversation of this kind gives us no bad reason to expect something like literary criticism proper, something such as Coleridge has given us in the *Biographia Literaria* in reference to Wordsworth. But Symmachus for the time contents himself with undertaking to defend the Mantuan's rhetoric, while the others overwhelm the impenitent Euangelus with a string of affirmations as to the poet's proficiency in politics, law, augury, astrological and other philosophy, fidelity to the traditions of the Latin language, &c. But the justifications of these

praises are deferred by the announcement of dinner, and for a time the conversation turns to lighter subjects—the famous string of stories for which Macrobius is most commonly quoted, including scandal about Princess Julia. Only in the third book, and then, it would seem, after a lacuna, is the detailed criticism of Virgil resumed.

There is no occasion to find fault with the quantity of it, for it fills, with a digression or two of the lighter kind, such as that on the dessert when it appears, four whole books, and some two hundred and forty pages in Eyssenhardt's text. But the quality is, at any rate from our point of view, not quite so satisfactory. Much simply consists in citation of passages illustrating different "Figures." A very large part, probably the largest, is mere and sheer quotation from Virgil himself, from Homer, and from other poets, Latin and Greek, with whom he is compared. And the comparison is carried on almost, if not quite entirely, on that most unsatisfying parallel-passage system which, in its abuse, has ever since been the delight of the pedantic criticaster—and the abomination of the true critic.

Of course the parallel passage, rightly handled, is invaluable —is practically indispensable to true literary criticism. The "Truth" passages of the *Areopagitica* and Halifax's *Character of a Trimmer*, the "Death" passages of Raleigh, Marston, and Lee, the different harmonies which the motive "Ask me no more" has suggested to Carew and Tennyson, the accounts of the passing of Arthur or the parting of Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory, and in his probable verse original, are the constant, the inexhaustible, texts and exercises of the critical faculty. But I do not think it unfair to Macrobius to say that hardly in a single occasion does he make any such use of his parallels. And in literary criticism, properly so called, such parallels as

οὐδέ τις ἄλλη
φαίνετο γαιάων ἀλλ' οὐρανὸς ἠδε θάλασσα,

and

"Nec jam amplius ulla
apparet tellus, cælum undique et undique pontus,"

are all but valueless. They merely show what might be demon-

strated once for all in a page—what does not need demonstrating to any intelligent person who has read fifty lines of the two poets—that Virgil was an excellent translator, and was, rather more frequently than becomes a great poet, content simply to translate.

The rest of the matter lies, for the most part if not wholly, as much as this or more in the uttermost precincts of literary criticism proper. The illustrations of Virgil's attention to that religious ritual and liturgical language which was so important at Rome are very curious, very interesting, very valuable but they scarcely touch the fringe of literature: a Roman Blackmore could be as prolific of them as the Roman Dryden.

The contents of Book IV. may, perhaps, be urged against me; and I shall confess that they come nearer to a certain conception of literary criticism. But I should reply that this conception itself is an argument on the side I am taking. One of the gaps, common at the opening of the books of the *Saturnalia*, plunges us into the midst of a demonstration of Virgil's pathos, that word being sometimes used in the Greek plural *pathe*, and referring to the Rhetorical "passions" appealed to. We find, however, almost directly, that the citations are only applied to illustrate and enforce Virgil's technical command of rhetoric, as Symmachus had foreshadowed. The parts are accordingly dealt out in the orthodox way between accuser and defendant, and the passages quoted are distributed once more under figures—Irony, Hyperbole, and the rest. This, of course, is literary criticism after a fashion, though a fashion which Quintilian had already treated with some disdain (abandoning it almost entirely in the best parts of his own critical work), and which Longinus, though he too was not quite bold enough to discard it entirely, avoids, either cunningly or instinctively, in all his best passages. Macrobius and his distinguished company seem to wish for nothing better, and after they have complacently ticked off the sorts and sources of the pathos—time, place, circumstance, age, mood, manner, and so forth—they decide triumphantly, at the beginning of the Fifth Book, that Virgil must be held no less of an orator than of a poet. Indeed, Eusebius, who has conducted the rhetorical inquiry, draws a neat parallel between

Virgil and Cicero himself The eloquence, he says, of the Mantuan is multiplex and multiform, and comprehends every kind of speech In your Cicero [Eusebius of course is a Greek] there is one tenor of eloquence, the abundant, and torrential, and copious For the nature of orators is not uniform, but one flows and overflows, another affects a brief and concise manner. The thin and dry and sober speaker loves, as it were, a parsimony of words, his rival revels in full and florid and amply illustrated rhetoric Virgil is the only man who, while others are so dissimilar, blends his own eloquence of every kind. And he subsequently distributes these kinds more specially to Cicero, Sallust, Fronto, and the younger Pliny. The passage which follows, for three or four pages, till the scoffer Euangelus brings on the Homeric parallels by asking whether they think a Venetian farmer's boy is likely to have known Greek literature, is one of the most literary in the book. But it is (as a devil's advocate must point out) curious and a little unfortunate that once more we find the subject drawn, as it were, irresistibly to the oratorical side In no other branch of literature, it seems, could a Roman or a late Greek (which Macrobius probably was) taste the *minutiæ* of difference, the savours and qualities which concern criticism proper Elsewhere he "stuck in letters," or in Figures, or in the merest schematic construction of prosody, or in the matter, as opposed to the form and spirit, of the literature

Another piece of criticism, proper if not consummate, will be found in the seventeenth chapter of the Fifth Book, in the shape of a fresh comparison, to be itself compared with that cited above from Gellius, between Pindar's Ætna in the First Pythian and Virgil's in the third *Æneid* It is an even weaker piece. For the critic, a Greek, cavils at Virgil quite in the Rymer-and-Dennis style, not merely because he speaks of an *atram nubem* as *fumantem candente favilla*, but (exactly as if he were an eighteenth-century French critic speaking of Shakespeare) because the poet actually indulges in such shocking words as *eructans*.

The Sixth Book deals with Virgil's borrowing of diction and phrase from the older Latin poets, and has, of course, great

linguistic, and a certain portion of literary, interest. But it is again remarkable how little this latter is improved or worked out. As in the Homeric case, the literary interest of the fact that Virgil was content simply to "lift" Ennian phrases, like *stellis fulgentibus* or *tollitur in cœlum clamor*, is limited to the demonstration that Virgil "stole his brooms ready made," as the Berkshire broom-squire did. And no attempt is made (as might easily have been done, and in fairness to Virgil should have been done) to show the taste with which the poet selected beautiful words and happy phrases. Servius, later in the book, has some not uninteresting verbal criticism, but attempts nothing more. In fact, in all this bulk of work there is not as much literary criticism in the proper sense as Longinus has often given us in a paragraph, and hardly an attempt at even that general characterisation which we find sometimes in Gellius and still more in Quintilian. The place and power of Virgil remain untouched, or are referred to only in the vaguest conventionalisms.

Servius on Virgil.

One of the contributors, as has been said, to the Macrobian symposium is no less a person than Maurus (or Marius) Servius Honoratus, the greatest commentator on the greatest Latin poet in general repute, and obviously, from the figure he makes in the *Saturnalia*, a man held in very high esteem for erudition and ability. We have his commentary,[1] together with those of other ancient commentators of less repute. They are extremely voluminous;[2] they are, and always have been, justly respected for their value in the interpretation of the poet. Servius had before him, and undoubtedly used, a very large bulk of precedent annotation, and represents, almost fully, the "Variorum" editor of modern times. We might therefore expect to find in him, if not something like the proceedings and results of Mr Furness in his *Shakespeare*, at any rate something like those of the Johnson-Malone time. Let us see what we actually do find. He gives us, at the very first, a definition of the duties of a critical editor, in which, on the face of it, there is very little to blame. The life of the poet; the titles of his

[1] Ed. Lion, 2 vols., Göttingen, 1826.

[2] The edition just quoted contains, without its indices, all but 1000 pages of very close and small print.

work; the quality of the poem; the intention of the writer; the number of the books, the order of them, the explanation of them. Looking at this off-hand, one may wonder a little at the elevation to co-ordinate honours of the number and order of the books, and of course perceive that *qualitas carminis*, the critical point, is susceptible of rather widely differing interpretations as a promise. In the vague modern sense of "quality"—a sense, too, not absolutely unknown in ancient times—it covers by itself almost all that the most accomplished and wide-ranging criticism—the criticism of Coleridge or of Arnold, of Hazlitt or of Sainte-Beuve—can extend unto. In the narrow technical sense of the Greek ποιότης, it comes to very little more than the mere technical classification of the piece as epic or what not, and offers us food as little sappy with critical juice as the most arid distinctions of Rhetoric.

But we have barely turned a page when the sense in which Servius understands the comparative extent of the duties he has so lucidly mapped out breaks upon us. The "life," brief and business-like, leaves no special room for complaint except to anecdote-mongers. But all the rest, except the "explanation," is huddled up in less than a page, and in forms as succinct as the answers to a catechism. Title? "Æneis," derived from Æneas, cf. Juvenal's "Theseis." Quality? Quite clear: the metre is heroic, the action "mixed" (*i.e.*, the poet sometimes speaks himself, sometimes introduces others speaking). It is also Heroic, because it contains a mixture of divine and human things, of truth and fiction. For Æneas really did come to Italy, but clearly the poet made it up[1] when he represented Venus speaking to Jupiter, or the mission of Mercury. The style is grandiloquent—that is to say, the phrase is lofty and the sentiments noble. Besides, are there not three kinds of speaking, the low, the middle, the grand? This is the grand style. Virgil intended first to imitate Homer, then to magnify the ancestry of Augustus (proofs of this latter given). Here there is no dispute about the number of the author's books, though in other cases (such as that of Plautus) there is. And there is not much doubt about the order, though a mere crotcheteer might put

[1] *Constat esse compositum.*

them in the order 2, 3, 1, in his ignorance that the art of the poet consists in beginning at the middle and anticipating the future (see Horace). This shows that Virgil was a skilful bard. That is all. *Sola superest explanatio quæ in sequenti expositione probabitur.*

Sola superest explanatio! All, except the mere verbal part, is swept aside, as settled and done for, in these thirty or forty lines. Of the *quality*, in the fuller and higher sense, of the Virgilian art nothing; nothing of its comparative value even with that of Homer himself, still less of other Greeks, or with that of Ennius, of Lucretius, of Statius, of the scores of Roman epic or "heroic" poets whom and whose books Servius had before him, while their names only are before us. Nothing of his way of managing his metre, his diction, his prosopopœia, his scenery, his dialogue. And in the settlement of the questions that are attacked, the most schoolboy-like abstinence from anything but reference to stock authorities, stock classifications. Nothing, for instance, one would think, would be easier and more attractive, for a man who thinks that Virgil's is the grand style, than to prove it to be so, nothing more curious and fascinating than to reply to the objections of those who think it is not, if there be such heretics (and, as we know from the Euangelus of the *Saturnalia*, there were such, even in those days). But no glimpse or glimmer of any such thing enters the mind of our scholiast. There are, everybody allows, three styles: Low, Middle, and Grand. Nobody calls Virgil low; you surely would not call him middle; therefore he must be grand. Q.E.D.; and demonstrated it is most mathematically. Then what kind of poem is it? You run your finger down the official list of kinds and find "Heroic; written in hexameters and dealing with mixed kinds." Virgil is in hexameters, but *is* he mixed? Let us run the careful finger down yet another table, "Mixed: that which is partly divine and partly human, partly false, partly true." Let us see whether this will apply to Virgil. It does. Then Virgil is Heroic. Next, about order and so forth. Ought not Books II. and III., which tell the voyage of Æneas up to the events recorded in the opening of Book I., to come before it? This gives a moment's pause, but let us look at our Horace—*Ut*

jam nunc dicat, and so forth. Once more, we need not trouble ourselves: the order is all right.

To some readers this account may savour of flippancy; and to them it is impossible to offer any excuse. To others, who may not be likely to take the trouble to read Servius for themselves, it will be enough to say that practically nothing is put in his mouth which he does not say, that his method is hardly caricatured even in form. It is one of the best illustrations we have, or could reasonably expect to have, of the whole system of ancient criticism, save in its very greatest examples, and to some extent even in these. You construct, or accept from tradition as already constructed, a vast classification of terms and kinds, hierarchically arranged; and when a subject presents itself you simply refer it to the classification. Practically no intellectual labour is required, and still less—a mere minus quantity indeed—of cultivation of the æsthetic sentiment. The necessary cards, with the necessary descriptions on them, are in cell B or A, compartment *x* or *y*, case 3 or 5, room I. or VI. You take them out and you tie them on, and there's an end of the matter. Nay, some fifteen hundred years after Servius, there are other authorities who conduct criticism—and are indignant when it is not conducted—in the very self-same way.

But, it may be said, *superest explanatio;* the explanation does remain, and there may be much in that. In point of bulk there is very much; in point of value there is a great deal; but in point of strict criticism there is simply nothing, though the same reference to card, and cell, and compartment, and case abounds, as thus:—

Arma virumque. Arma means "war": it is the trope called Metonymy. So *toga* for "peace," see Cic. As for *Arma virumque*, it is another figure—that by which we change the order: some call it Hyperbaton. The whole phrase is a professive poetic beginning; *Musa*, &c., an invocative, and *urbs antiqua* a narrative. As for *virum*, he does not mention the name, but indicates the person circumstantially. And now, as Thackeray says somewhere, "we know all about it, and can proceed" to write the exordium of an Æneid.

Far, very far, be it from me to speak with any ignorant or

vulgar contempt of Servius. His erudition is very great; his verbal expositions are almost always very sound and grammatical; but for him we should lack a whole world of traditional information, without which the meaning of Virgil would either be entirely dark to us, or attainable only by the rashest of guesswork. And it must be admitted that according to the "figure" system of criticising he is, as the Roman orators say, *accuratissimus*. When Virgil, as he so often does, borrows a phrase from Ennius with a slight alteration, Servius points out that it is an *acyrologia*, and no doubt feels much comforted by the fact. Something else is an *amblysia* (a "blunting," lessening, *litotes*). There are derivations, anticipating the modern philologist, of the most scientific kind, as that of *consilia* for *considia*, because people's minds become quieter when they sit down. There is, indeed, a very great deal of miscellaneous information of all kinds.

But of criticism nothing, or less than nothing. Occasionally, at the beginning of the books, it does seem to occur to the excellent commentator that something more may be expected of him. Especially, and indeed most naturally, is this the case with the Fourth. He tells us, quite properly, that Apollonius had written an *Argonautica*, and that the whole book is borrowed from it.[1] It is; a fact of which those persons who (having better knowledge than Dante had) still take Virgil for a supreme poet might perhaps take more notice than they have usually taken. But to Servius, and persons of Servius' way of thinking, there would not have been much in this. He goes on. It is almost entirely in affection, though it has pathos in the end, where the departure of Æneas begets sorrow. It consists entirely in counsels and subtleties. The style is very nearly comic—which is not surprising, considering that it treats of love. But there is a proper junction with the former book, which is a proof of art, as we have often said. An abrupt transition is a bad transition, though some people foolishly say that this junction is not well managed, &c., &c.

One may be, I hope without affectation, a little aghast at this.

[1] The enthusiastic Maronite usually urges that not the whole is conveyed, and that Virgil combines his conveyances. Let it be so.

Grant that Virgil shows his want of originality by his relying on Apollonius. Grant that in the delineation of Dido's tragic "All for Love and the World well Lost" for such a tame scoundrel as Æneas, he has none of the lightning strokes of Lucretius or Catullus. Yet most of us think that the Fourth book is a great thing, some that it is a much greater thing than the *Æneid* of which it forms part. Servius might think, was entitled to think, and has the consent of many respectable moderns in thinking, differently. But it does not appear that he thought about it at all. He found in his books a distinction between "affection" and "pathos," and applied it. He had learnt from the same books that Love was an inferior subject, Comedy an inferior style, and the former a proper theme of the latter. So the Fourth book, with its steady rise towards the hopeless, the hapless, the inevitable end, is *pœne comicus*. Certainly the criticism is, from our point of view.

But the very value of Servius, as of so many other writers, is precisely this, that he is *not* writing from our point of view, that he is writing from a point of view entirely different. When he annotates *Est in secessu* "*Topothesia* est—*i.e.*, fictus secundum poeticam licentiam locus. . . . Nam *topographia* est rei veræ descriptio," it may be difficult to repress a smile. So also when he points out, in respect to one of Anna's speeches to Dido, not that it is touching, or eloquent, or indicative of a wonderful knowledge of the human heart, and an equally wonderful grasp of pathetic expression, but that it is regular Rhetoric—*suasione omni parte plena; nam purgat objecta, et ostendit utilitatem, et a timore persuadet.* But, after all, he is only playing his own game, not ours. It is impossible, or at any rate very difficult, to be sure whether it is in innocent unconsciousness or dry humour that he quotes, without comment, the objection to the phrase *nepos Veneris* that it is unbecoming to represent Venus as a grandmother. Again, in one of his short prefaces to the Seventh book—at the point when, to modern readers, the interest of the *Æneid* is all but over, and the romantic wanderings of Æneas, the passion of the Fourth book, the majesty and magnificence of the Sixth, are exchanged for the kite-and-crow battles of Trojans and Rutulians, the doll-like

figure of Lavinia, and the unjust fate of the hero Turnus at the hands of a divinely helped invader—he tells us that the earlier books have been like the *Odyssey* (as indeed they are), not because of the romantic interest, which of course he did not see, but as being *graviores varietate personarum et allocutionum*, while the last books are like the *Iliad*, as being *negotiis validiores!*

So, again, the relatively long preface to the *Bucolics* tells us that the word comes from the Greek for oxen, which are the principal rustical animals; that these poems were invented in the time of Xerxes, when the Laconians (one does not quite see why, as Xerxes never landed in the Peloponnese) were kept to their walls or the mountains; that the *qualitas* is a *humilis character*, thus, with the *medius* of the *Georgics*, vindicating all the three styles for Virgil. For we must not require lofty speaking from humble rustics. He then gives us a curious specimen of the critical punctiliousness in matters of mint, anise, and cumin which accompanied blindness to weightier things. In bucolic verse there ought, it seems, to be a pause at the fourth foot; and if that foot is a dactyl so much the better; and it is better also that the first foot should be a dactyl and included in the word, and so forth.

For a final specimen he tells us, in the corresponding introduction to the *Georgics* themselves, that as Virgil had followed Homer, and had not come near him in the *Æneid*, as he had followed Theocritus and run a good second in the *Eclogues*, so he followed Hesiod, and "simply left him" (*penitus reliquit*) in the *Georgics*. It required enormous skill to do what he has done. (So far so good, but before very long we come again to the parting of the ways.) The book is didactic, and therefore it should be written to somebody, for teaching presupposes two personages—the teacher and the taught. Again, one does not know whether to smile or not, to take the matter gravely and urge that any *lector benevolus* will occupy quite sufficiently the *personam discipuli*, or to pass the matter, *olli subridens*, and reflecting that our legs also are not unexposed to the arrows.

It can scarcely be necessary to take special examples from the minor commentators on Virgil or on other Latin poets: for

their characteristics are, so far as I know, exactly uniform with those of Servius and with those of the Greek scholiasts. In explanation of words and things diligent to admiration, and extremely serviceable, if not always (according to modern standards, which are very likely temporary) scientific. In matters of prosody excellently minute and regular, though occasionally a little arbitrary. Not very seldom careful, to an almost touching extent, of referring phrases to the accepted categories of Figure, and applying the stock Rhetorical divisions and classifications. But not merely in the higher, but even in the middle regions of criticism proper, so meagre that they may almost be called entirely to seek. Quite rudimentary in Comparison; in indicating character, content to accept stock divisions, and not even attempting individual *signalement*. Abstaining with such uniformity that one can easily perceive the entire absence of any demand for it, from any attempt to deal with the literary beauty of phrase or of passage, to bring out its effect on the reader, to estimate it as a work of art, like a picture or a statue. And now and then, as we have seen, not merely not applying the right, but applying totally wrong, tests to literature and especially to poetry, demanding from this latter compliance with the arbitrary requirements of traditional Rhetoric, and praising it for such compliance. Are they to be blamed for all this? Certainly not; no one is to be blamed for not doing what he never intended to do and what nobody wanted him to do, for doing what was his commission and his business. But they are to be cited, and examined, and recorded as witnesses to prove that, for the most part at any rate, criticism, in the best and highest sense, was what no critic thought of giving, and no reader thought of demanding, under the Latin dispensation.

Other commentators.

It may not be uninteresting to accompany (as we did in the case of Greek) this view of the later criticism, more or less formal, with some account of the poets where they touch the subject. These touches are not frequent or important, but we find some in Ausonius for the end of the fourth century, and in the curious collection bearing (with what imparity of suggested contrast!) the title of the Latin Anthology, and

supposed to have been put together at Carthage, at the end of the fifth, or a little later.

The unequal and decadent, but sometimes fascinating, author[1] of the *Mosella* and the *Cupido cruci affixus*, of the two charming epigrams to wife and mistress—

"Uxor vivamus,"

and

"Deformem quidam te dicunt, Crispa"—

has, in his epigrams themselves, followed Martial in directions where he is a less blameless guide than in his literary criticism.

Ausonius. But he has not followed him here; and though much of the collection is simply a translation of the Greek Anthology, I do not remember any literary following thereof. But the curious verse celebration of what we may call the University of Bordeaux, with its "commemoration," in separate pieces of varying length and metre, of a couple of dozen of Professors; the Fourth Idyll, to his namesake and grandson on his studies; and the Epistles, especially those to Paullus the Rhetor and to Tetradius, all have more or less to do with the subject.

We find, and are not surprised to find, that of the Professors at Bordeaux the majority are Professors of Rhetoric. Compliment has naturally rather the better of criticism in the addresses to them, but certain things emerge. Tib. Victor Minervius is "another Quintilian," especially for fluency and for the *Demosthenicum* (I suppose δεινότης); but it is a little suspicious that the fullest praise is given to his *memory*. Latinus Alcimus Alethius seems to have been himself a careful critic, and appears to have written specially on Sallust and on the Emperor Julian — perhaps the books are somewhere? Attius Patera was "a descendant of the Druids," and we should have been glad to know whether he displayed that "Celtic spirit" in literature of which we have heard more than enough in these days. But Ausonius is vague as

[1] Ausonius received little attention from scholars till very recently; and I know *him only*, as I have long known him, in the Delphin edition and the *Corpus Poetarum*. There are now, however, I believe, editions by Peiper, Leipsic, 1886, and Schenkl, Berlin, 1883, besides monographs.

the Celtic vague itself. Attius Tiro Delphinius was a poet as well as an orator. Others—the dead Luciolus, Alethius Minervius the Younger, the Grammarian Lentulus, "*cognomine Lascivus*" (quite innocent, Ausonius tells us), his brother Jucundus, are more generally commended. Pieces, two grouped and some single, to the Greek and the Latin grammarians of Bordeaux—show that the languages, as well as the literatures, received plentiful attention. The compliment to Exuperius of Toulouse goes closer, and is decidedly double-edged.[1] Erudition is specially attributed to Staphylius, who knew not only Livy and Herodotus, but "all that is stored in the thousand volumes of Varro" (*sexcentis*, of course). It is observable that the grammarians[2] appear to have chiefly lectured on poetry, the Rhetors on prose, and the whole, with touches numerous, if not very definite, suggests to us a study liberal enough, but perhaps not very wide, rather undiscriminating. The Idyll to his nephew enters naturally into a few more particulars. A generous but general incitement to the study of the tongues is followed by detail. The, as it seems to us, very odd conjunction of Homer and Menander is an additional testimony to the popularity of the great New Comic. It can hardly be accidental, for it is separated by some lines from any other mention. In fact, Ausonius is not prodigal of names, only those of Horace, Virgil, and Terence being mentioned for Latin poetry, and the work, though not the name, of Sallust, with some other histories of the last Republican period. Lastly, the Epistles, besides supplying fresh instances of Ausonius' *rococo* fancy for the cento—even the Macaronic cento—supply a perhaps humorous prose criticism in form of his own work, which is worth subjoining.[3]

[1] He has praised him (Prof. xvii.) for his stately walk, his *verba ingentia*, his handsome dress, and adds—

"Copia cui fandi longe pulcherrima: *quam si*
Auditu tenus acciperes deflata placeret.
Discussam scires solidi nihil edere sensus."

[2] It may be barely necessary to append the caution that *grammaticus* is a good deal more than "grammarian" in the most limited sense, including "philologist," "critic," &c. Some preferred *literatus*, as the Latin word.

[3] *In verbis rudem; in eloquendo hiulcum; a propositis discrepantem; in versibus concinnationis expertum, in cavillando natura invenustum nec arte conditum; diluti salis et fellis ignavi; nec de mimo planipedem nec de comœdis histrionem.*

The *Anthologia Latina*,[1] which a certain noble youth of the name of Octavian composed at the bidding of some Vandal chieftain, perhaps as late as 532, at the extreme verge of the twilight of the West, is not entirely deserving of the transferred sense attached to its patron's nationality. It has preserved one or two pretty things for us, and more curious ones. And, in our particular relation, it shows that literary society and occupation had by no means gone wholly out of fashion. Both with individuals and coteries Virgil was a perversely favourite subject; and the deplorable persons who called themselves the Twelve Wise Men wrote distichs, and pentastichs, and polystichs, *à dormir debout*, on the contents of the books of the *Æneid* and other subjects. The epigrams attributed to Seneca are probably, whether they belong to any of the known Senecas or not, of an older and better time; and the pair (Nos. 27 and 28) on the theme of *Ære perennius*, though the sentiment is of course a commonplace, have a grip and ring of style which, at any rate after the flaccid barbarisms of the sixth century, shows well. But for the literary taste of this time itself, the works of a certain Luxorius (a contemporary it would seem, and, from the word *spectabilis*, probably of official rank) are most valuable. They are of some bulk, consisting of not much less than a hundred pieces, filling some forty pages in Baehrens's edition. The body of the work, according to the usual *prava docilitas* of the epigrammatist, consists of things licentious or trivial enough; but Luxorius had read his Martial in this respect more closely than Ausonius, that he begins with three or four pieces of a critical or semi-critical kind. He is thoroughly convinced of the danger of writing after the ancients; but, as he says with some force to the Reader, "If you think them of better quality, why don't you read them and not me?" He consoles his book, should it meet with contempt at Rome and Carthage, with the observation that things must be content with their proper places; and in a fourth piece

The Antho- logia Latina.

[1] *Poetæ Latini Minores*, ed. Baehrens, vol. iv. Sidonius Apollinaris, who comes between Ausonius and the Anthology, and has much concern for us, is deliberately postponed to the next Book.

pleads that if his epigrams are short, why, the reading will be the sooner finished. The tone, with a good deal less disguised conceit, is very much that of a literary *abbé* or President of the eighteenth century—a kind of person with whose general tastes, literary, and other, Luxorius would probably have sympathised well enough.

The Latin Rhetoricians.

We may now complete our survey of the actual documents by dealing with such remnants as we have of the technical treatises on Rhetoric in Latin. These are neither numerous nor bulky, nor, with one exception at the very end of the classical, and gate of the mediæval, period (to which latter some of them even belong), of much interest or importance. The fact may seem a little surprising, in face of the immense interest in the practice of the subject, which not merely Seneca, and Quintilian, and Pliny, but all others, show. But the surprise will vanish at a little consideration. Before the Romans attempted it, the technical part of Rhetoric had been reduced, as we saw, to a settled scheme of extreme intricacy by the Greeks, and these claimed to be as much the masters of the subject as Jews were of Medicine in the Middle Ages. Probably every Roman, though he might attend his own countrymen's declamations, learnt the art of Rhetoric from a Greek professor at one time or another, and was familiar with the Greek *technæ*. It was only after the separation of the Empires, and not even immediately then, that Greek ceased to be the language of education. Moreover, the Romans, though of orderly and business-like habits of thought, had neither the liking nor the language suited for the intenser and minuter technicalities of the Art.

It may be almost sufficient justification of the last paragraph to mention that the whole body of Latin Rhetoricians, as given in the standard edition of Capperonnier,[1] fills but a volume of

[1] *Rhetores Latini* (Argentorati, 1756). It is, however, worth while to substitute, or add, the newer edition of Halm (2 vols., Leipsic, 1863), which gives not only critical apparatus and very useful indices, but some more texts from MSS. Ernesti's *Lexicon Technologiæ Latinorum Rhetoricæ* (Lips., 1795) is only less necessary than its Greek companion, inasmuch as Latin-English lexicographers have been less neglectful of rhetorical vocabulary than Greek-English—but still necessary.

some 400 not very large quarto pages; and that this is made up by the insertion not merely of the Rhetorical part of Martianus Capella, but of such purely mediæval or "Dark Age" work as that of Bede, Isidore, and possibly Alcuin. These latter will find better place in the next Book. Martianus shall be noticed by himself presently; we may meanwhile run over the rest.

Rutilius Lupus, &c.

The first in order, and perhaps the oldest, is the Treatise on the Figures of P. Rutilius Lupus, a rhetorician often quoted by Quintilian. It is in the dictionary form, but not alphabetically arranged. The definitions are technical, meagre, and chiefly limited to that jejune splitting of kinds which has been noticed under the head of Greek. The illustrative quotations, which are numerous and not useless, are wholly from Greek authors, many of them indicating by their time that the Gorgias, whose four books Quintilian tells us that Rutilius abstracted into one, was not the sophist of Leontini, but a later Athenian rhetorician. Except for the close connection which—until quite recently if not still—has existed between the Figures and criticism, this has little interest for us.

The next treatise, that of Aquila Romanus, is in the same way only a Latin accommodation of the work of Alexander (*v. supra*, p. 102). It is of the same class, a non-alphabetical dictionary in miniature, and devoted to the same subject. Of the same class again, exactly, is the tractate of Julius Rufinianus, who, since he keeps, as Rutilius and Aquila had not done, the Greek words *schema* for *figura*, and *lexis* for *elocutio*, was probably a closer adapter, paraphrast, or translator of his original even than they. He has added a short parallel treatment of the other division of *schemata*, the intellectual or dianoetic.

Curius Fortunatianus: his Catechism.

Curius or Chirius Fortunatianus (a writer at any rate senior to Cassiodorus, who epitomised him) was more ambitious, and instead of confining himself to the Figures, composed a regular art of the Rhetoric of the Schools in three books. It supplies an interesting and early example of the catechetical form which was so popular during the middle ages, which continued to

flourish till within the memory of the present generation, and the disuse of which has certainly been accompanied by a loss in exactness of actual knowledge, compensated, or not, by a gain in the philosophical character of such as is acquired.

"Q. What is Rhetoric? A. The science of speaking well. Q. What is an orator? A. A good man skilled in speaking. Q. What is the duty of an orator? A. To speak well in civil cases. Q. What is his end? A. To persuade so far as the condition of things and persons allows."

And so forth—the writer proceeding by the simple method of throwing into catechism-form the same kind of dictionary matter which we have just noticed, sometimes with very odd effect, as in *Quæ est anœschyntos?*—a question which, if Mrs Quickly had heard it and had understood Greek, would doubtless have made her adjust to the occasion her objection to "Jenny's case." The thing, though curious, drags Rhetoric farther out of its proper course than ever, and one perhaps at no time feels more inclined to join in the contempt of scholastic methods, mistaken as one knows it to be, than when reading such questions as—*Assumpta qualitas facit statum?* and the rest of this liturgy of abracadabra in catechetical form. In no rhetorical treatise, indeed, is the question of style so unceremoniously ignored. A long handling of the *staseis* is followed by shorter ones of other technical divisions, "Elocution" receiving the most perfunctory treatment possible (though with a certain practicality). How are you to acquire diction? By reading, speaking, hearing others speak, and inventing new words (which must not be done too often). Put your long words last; but begin a sentence if you can with a long syllable, and do not keep too many short ones, or too many monosyllables, together; avoid archaisms; and attend to such minute, but in at least some cases arbitrary, rules as the following[1]:—

"Let your construction be more frequently round than flat; let it not gape with too frequent collision of vowels, especially long ones; nor be rough with the conflict of two consonants; let not many monosyllables be joined together let there be no

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

great stretch of short syllables nor many long ones; let not the first syllable of a word be the same as the last of the word before, nor let the two together make any awkward compound; let not the oration be deformed by many thin [1] words or vast syllables; and let not many genitive plurals come together." [2]

Cautions, it will be observed, sometimes judicious, sometimes capricious, but never reasoned.

Marius Victorinus on Cicero.

The commentary of Marius Victorinus on Cicero's *Rhetoric* is the longest of all these treatises. It contains a great deal of matter, and there is no discoverable reason why it should not have contained a great deal more. For the very first note on Cicero's words, "I have thought to myself of this often and very much," is as follows: "If there be only one of these, it does not indicate a sufficiently lengthy cogitation. For we may frequently think of a thing, but immediately desist from the thinking. We may also think long upon a thing, but do it only on a single day. He therefore has properly joined the two, and said: '*Often* and much have I thought to myself on this.' And because a thing ought not to be published unless it be certain and the result of deliberation, he rightly says: 'I thought of this *to myself*.'"

All this is exceedingly true; but it is also exceedingly trivial. And the second is like unto it. *Bonine an mali plus attulerit hominibus et civitatibus sc. eloquentia:* "The cause of his deliberation is not whether eloquence be good or bad, but whether it have more of good or of bad in it. The order of the words, however, is not unimportant, for he might have said, 'of bad or of good.' But Cicero stuck to the nature of eloquence, which, when it first began, did good to men, for it brought them together. But later, when it was depraved by the ingenuity of bad men, it hurt the republic very much. So he arranged the words in the proper order in saying *Bonine*, &c. The republic consists of two parts, private and public—that is to say, of men and states. We may notice this also in the Verrines, how Cicero always defends either men or cities."

[1] *Exilibus.*

[2] To avoid the *um-um* sound, the lowing" to which Quintilian objects, and which is undoubtedly one of the great defects of Latin as of Anglo-Saxon.

A man who is content to write like this need never stop while paper, pen, and ink hold out, or till the kindness of nature, or the impatience of men, puts an end to his life. Sometimes the comment is not quite so nugatory, especially when Victorinus illustrates the differences between Cicero and Hermagoras. But he seldom even approaches literary criticism.

The rest, save one, may be almost silence. The ambitiously entitled *Institutiones Oratoriæ* of Sulpicius Victor is incomplete. *Others.* What we have of it follows the usual order of "states" narration, &c., with some, but only a few, peculiarities. Most of the other articles are both meagre and late. Emporius deals with *ethopœia*, the Commonplace, and one or two other matters. There is a Latin version of the *Progymnasmata* of Hermogenes. The probably spurious *Principia Rhetorices*, attributed to St Augustine, are at least commended by his name, yet hardly by anything else; and the same may be said in lesser degree of the *Compendium* of Cassiodorus.[1] The verses of Rufinus, on the rhythms suitable to oratory, have more interest. And so we may come to Martianus.

Inferior as Latin criticism, on the Rhetorical side, is in comparison with Greek, it is not fanciful to say that it ends with a better note, though a quaint and fantastic one. The later stages in Greek, as we have seen, were mere arid technicalities or idle epideictic—ghosts of things no longer alive, and never perhaps alive with the best kind of life. What followed in the Byzantine age had at best the character of literary research. Such a book as that of Photius, invaluable as it is to us, has no life-promise in it, either as regards its own generation or for the future.

On the contrary, there is much of both, as we look back on it, in the eccentric treatise on the *Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, by Martianus Capella.[2] *Martianus Capella.* Of the author and date of the book we know, with accuracy, hardly anything at all. His full name appears to have been Martianus Minneius Felix Capella, and he is described as a Carthaginian. His date is much contested, as well as his religion, his occupa-

[1] We shall return to these in the next Book.

[2] Ed. Eyssenhardt. Leipsic, 1866.

tions, and other things which no mortal need trouble himself about; while this date, which *is* of some importance, cannot be adjusted very exactly. There is, however, not very much dispute that it must have been somewhere in the fifth century. "Before 439" is all that his latest editor, Eyssenhardt, will say.

What is certain is that the treatise is written in a very late and not a little barbarous Latin style, and that it was popular in the Middle Ages, with that peculiar popularity which seems to have settled itself upon Boethius, Orosius, and other writers of the last age before chaos—the age to which those who kept up education in chaos itself would be most likely to look back, as connecting them with the greater past yet not too far off.

Further, while we find in Martianus a firm outline of the exact scheme of Humaner Letters which prevailed from 500 to 1500, we find in his frame and setting, slightly preposterous and more than slightly fantastic as it is, just that touch of romance—of youth, with its promise as well as its foolishness—which is wanting in Byzantine work, and which has Future in it. On both these characteristics of the whole book we must say something, before coming to its rhetorical part.

The title of the book (to observe Servian formality) has been already given. Its form is that of the Varronian *satura*, or mingle-mangle of prose and verse; and it is divided into nine books. The first two of these serve as an introduction, containing a wonderful rigmarole, in more wonderful jargon,[1] about things in general, divine and human, the old mythology and physics, with abstract philosophical personifications, *Sophia*, *Phronesis*, and so forth, coming in. At last it settles down to the real plan of the treatise, which is that the Seven Liberal Arts, as adopted (very mainly from this book) by the Middle Ages, being estated as bridesmaids (or something like it) to Philology, each Art has a book to herself, and, in the flowery fantastic fashion of the Introduction, gives a summary of her

[1] There is, however, a certain barbaric charm — of the nose-ring and feather belt and head-dress kind—about this furthest development of the "African style" which Apuleius had started. The gay bombastic ornament of Anglo-Saxon prose-writing, both in Latin and vernacular, has sometimes been credited to Martianus.

teaching to the assembled gods. This summary is of the most precise and business-like character, despite its "trimmings," so that Grammar is not ashamed to inform the gods that "Ulcus makes ulceris, but pecus pecoris," and Logic rattles off things like *Primæ formæ primus modus est in quo conficitur ex duobus universalibus*, and so forth, after a fashion which suggests that the marriage itself might have been celebrated by Dean Aldrich with great propriety. The beginnings and ends of the books are generally decorated with verse, and with fancy *prosopopœiæ* of different kinds: but the stuff of the text is exactly what it was intended to be—solid schoolbook matter.

The book devoted to Rhetoric is the fifth, being preceded by those of Grammar and Logic, in the usual and indeed natural order of the Trivium:—

"*Gram.* loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet, *Rhet.* verba colorat,"

though Martianus does not arrange the Quadrivium exactly according to the second line of the mnemonic—

"*Mus.* canit, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *Ast.* colit Astra,"

his order being Geometry, or rather Geography, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Music.

The book on Rhetoric opens literally with a flourish of trumpets,—

"Interea sonuere tubæ,"—

which, as some sixteen rather bombastic hexameters full of *gradus*-tags inform us, quite alarms the gods, major and minor. In the midst of it there steps forth "a stately woman of lofty stature, and confidence greater than common, but radiantly handsome, helmed and crowned, weaponed both for defence and with flashing arms wherewith she could smite her enemies with a thundering coruscation. Under her armpits, and thrown over her shoulder in Latian fashion, was a vest, exhibiting embroidery of all possible *figures* in varied hue, while her breast was baldricked with gems of the most exquisite colour. As she walked her arms clashed, so that you would have thought the broken levin to rattle—with explosive handclaps,

like the collision of clouds, so that you might even believe her capable of wielding the thunderbolts of Jove. For she it is who, like a mighty queen of all things, can direct them whither she will and call them back whence she chooses, and unbend men to tears or incite them to rage, and sway the minds of civic crowds as of warring armies. She brought beneath her sway the senate, the rostra, the courts at Rome," &c., &c., the innocent and transparent allegory of the earlier part changing into a half-historical, half-philosophical account of the functions of Rhetoric generally. She is followed by a great crowd of men, some Greek, some Roman, among whom (it is worth mentioning, as a proof of the taste of the age) Æschines, Isocrates, and Lysias are specially mentioned for the one tongue, and, with some uncertain names, Pliny and Fronto in the other. Cicero is later put, by Rhetoric herself, as beyond competition in either. She displays her declamatory skill in a formal exordium, and then plunges into the usual matter of Rhetorical treatises. The treatment is technical, but by no means ill-arranged, clear enough even in the bewildering labyrinths of the *status*, not excessive in the Figures, and altogether one of the best of the Latin *Rhetorics*. When she finishes, Mercury beckons to her to join the group of those who had played their part, and to salute the bride. So she walks with much confidence up to Philology, gives her "a sounding kiss—for she can do nothing silently even if she would—on the top of her head,"[1] and joins the society of her sisters.

Recurring to the speech of one of these sisters, Grammar, and combining it with this, we shall have no ill notion of the helps to literary criticism with which the next thousand years of the world's history were provided in the west of Europe. They were rudimentary enough, and those who were furnished with them had in most cases no thought—indeed for long centuries hardly any opportunity—of using them for any critical pur-

[1] Martianus is curious in philematology. In the second book of the Introduction, when the Muses have described themselves in elaborate verse, one of the Graces kisses Philology "on that part of the forehead where a smooth middle space intervenes between the pubescence of the eyebrows."

pose. But they lay ready for the hand of others, and at the Renaissance, as well as in one brilliant and some minor instances earlier, they were turned with only a little delay to their proper purpose.

Grammar, with the quaintness that suffuses the whole book, says, "My parts are four—*litteræ, litteratura, litteratus, litterate.* 'Letters' are what I teach; 'Literature' am I who teach them; 'the man of letters' is he whom I shall have taught; '*literate*' the manner in which my pupil shall skilfully handle things." But the expectation thus raised is a little falsified, for "letters" are taken at their own foot, though Pallas pulls up Grammar and maintains that she has omitted the "historic part," which does not mean our historic in the very least, any more than *litteratura* means our Literature.

There is, however, both in these places and throughout the book, a great deal of "fine confused feeding," both on matters really literary and on those more or less subsidiary to literature, from Phonetics upwards. The citations, though not extremely frequent or copious, show pretty wide reading, especially in Latin. In the book on Rhetoric we find very particular and minute attention paid to these considerations of euphony to which attention has already been drawn, Martianus (who, whether we allow him poetry or not, was evidently a very careful and deft versifier[1]) applying his practice in the other harmony with his usual quaint conceit here. Nowhere, perhaps, do we better perceive, though nowhere may we find it more difficult exactly to follow, the niceties of the ancient ear, than in the caution that while it is well to end a clause with a molossus (three longs), if the final word is a trisyllable you must be careful to put a trochee before it, and by no means a spondee or pyrrhic. Thus "Littus ejectis," with which Tully finishes a clause, is all right, but "rupes ejectis" would be *pessima clausula*, and "apex ejectis" (where *apex* is described as a

[1] His Anacreontics in particular are sometimes by no means inelegant. His use of metrical terms is, however, sometimes odd, and tells tales of the inroads and havoc of the accent. Thus below he speaks of a molossus with a short first syllable!

pyrrhic, according to its natural quantity in the oblique cases) almost worse.

Further than this, however, Low Latin was not encouraged by its tutor Martianus to advance. Nor 'is it surprising that with such teaching we find no such advance in the first lisping of the modern literatures themselves, till the strangely articulate speech of their greatest critic, as he was their greatest creator—Dante the Wingbearer.

INTERCHAPTER II.

In considering and summing up the contribution of ancient Latin literature to the history and achievements of Criticism, we may conveniently adopt a threefold division and arrangement, so as to see, first, what was the general character of Latin criticism as contrasted with Greek, and with that comparative study of literature which has only recently become possible; secondly, its actual and positive achievement; thirdly, the state in which it left the chances of the future.

The first point under the first head is obvious at once, and has been repeatedly glanced at and referred to already. The Romans had what the Greeks had not and could not have—the advantage of literary comparison in two tongues. This—it may be said a thousand times over, and not be said too often—is an advantage so enormous that nothing else is required to show the wonderful faculty of the nation which could effect so much without it. Without comparison, not merely is the diagnosis of qualities mostly guesswork, but even the discovery of them becomes extremely difficult. With comparison, the qualities almost "leap to the eyes," and the difference of their results goes far to help in the differentiation of their natures.

At the same time, this advantage, huge as it still was, was conditioned and hampered by the fact that Latin, as a language, was an extremely close connection of Greek, and, as a literature, was daughter and pupil in one. It would be stepping out of the safe and solid, if not often trodden, path which has been prescribed for this book, to inquire whether, if more scope had been given to the Italian and less to the Italiote[1]

[1] Of course I do not mean to imply that the Italiote cities were the direct source of the Greek element in classical Latin literature.

element, this need have been the case; it is sufficient for our strictly historical inquiry that it was the case as a matter of fact. With rare exceptions, of which the Satire itself is a doubtful chief, with few and more doubtful followers, the Romans invented no form of literature whatsoever. Nor did they, as more literary races have so often done, re-create and make their own the forms that they borrowed. The earlier lost Roman tragedy was, it is clear, simply *calqué* upon Greek, as was the Roman comedy (though the mother-wit of Plautus, one of the most original of Latin writers not of the decadence, gives it an original air) absolutely *calqué* upon the later forms of the Attic. The Epic was even more slavishly imitative—those who rate Virgil highest must admit that, delicately as he walks, and elegant as is his footgear, he simply steps in the foot-prints, now of Homer, now of Apollonius, now, in all probability, of writers who happen to be lost. The Latin Lyric poets dare invent no fresh scheme; the historians, even those of genius, have the fear, or at any rate the following, of the Greeks always before them. And so they deprive themselves, from the critical point of view, of the very advantage with which they start—they lose their chance of finding out the real forms of literature, transcending those of any particular tongue, by assimilating the forms of their own as exactly as possible to another's.

And this lack of independence continues to betray itself throughout, and at once to lessen their opportunities for criticism, and dilute the quality of such criticism as they do venture upon. The Roman—it has been observed, and truly observed, a thousand times—is a man of letters almost always by accident, and on the way to being something else. When he is not, he is generally of the second class. Virgil, Horace, and Cicero perhaps are the chief exceptions, and the two first at any rate, if not the third, were among the most artificial, if also of the most artful, imitators of the Greeks. To Catullus, his exquisite and hardly surpassed poetical faculty was evidently little more than a toy or a pastime—helpful to express his moods of love or of laughter, and that was all. So the magnificent singing robes of Lucretius cover a man who has hardly a thought of being a poet, who aims mainly at being a

philosopher; and the scarcely inferior Muse of Juvenal positively turns her back on her sisters, and busies herself with a sardonic "criticism of life," in which indignant disdain is oddly blended with a strange interest in all trifles, and all serious things, that are *not* literary. The men with whom literature is, if not exactly a passion, a really serious interest, are, on the other hand, "polyhistoric" persons of talent, in strengths varying from Cicero himself to Pliny, or else men like Martial, admirable practitioners, and something more, in a limited and not very high kind.

Yet, again, though the Roman talent was extremely business-like, it was by no means subtle. It could, at any rate to some extent, borrow the fanciful Greek refinements; but it found a necessity of changing them into hard and fast rules.

To all this we must add another thing of the first importance. Great as were the accidental advantages of oratory in Greece, they were almost greater at Rome. During every age of the Republic a good speaker had a great weight in his favour; but in its last age, unless the luck was strangely against him, honours and wealth were to be had by him simply for the asking. Under the Empire his position as to the honours of the state was a little more precarious, and his talents (if he was a very honest man and not a very discreet one) were not unlikely to bring him into trouble. But if he were not too scrupulous—as in the case of Eprius Marcellus, of that Regulus whom Pliny evidently admired almost as much as he loathed him, of Fabricius Veiento, and others—these talents could be dishonestly made subservient to fortune. Even in the worst times of the worst emperors their exercise in the law courts was fairly safe, and extremely profitable; while the rage for declamations also gave the art of speaking a factitious but very great popularity.

Hence there was no fear, or hope, of Oratory being brought to its proper place among the departments of literature. On the contrary, the practical prosaic character of the people tended to exalt it higher than ever over such kickshaws as poetry. Probably nine out of ten Romans would have agreed with Aper in the *Dialogus*.

All this was not particularly favourable to any practice of criticism, and particularly unfavourable to a fresher and wider interpretation of it. Yet, as we have seen, there was something of a set towards literary criticism of a kind in Rome. There, fashion was at once very powerful and very conservative: and the fashion of literary conversations, especially after dinner, set by the Scipios and others when they came into contact on their foreign campaigns with lettered Greeks, seems never to have died out till the very incoming of the Dark Ages, if then. It may have been—it was—more philological, antiquarian, "folklorish," and what not, than strictly literary, but it was sometimes this. The other fashion of recitation and declamation, closely connected with this, provided also material for it. Sometimes, no doubt, these literary conversations were a terrible bore, as the satirists not obscurely tell us, and as Pliny, in a letter[1] full of good sense and pleasantness, points out to a friend of his who had been bored at another kind of dinner, where the fun was provided by *scurræ*, *moriones*, and other professional persons not to be mentioned in English.

From all this we find, and are not surprised to find, that literary critical talk, and literary critical writing, in Rome, turned much more upon oratory than upon any other department, and that, when they did turn on others, these were often merely or mainly regarded as storehouses of quotation and patterns of imitation for the orator. There was, indeed, one additional reason for this which has not yet been mentioned, but which was not unnaturally among the most powerful of all. Oratory was about the only division of literature in which even a very patriotic Roman could, with any show of reason, consider his countrymen the equals of the Greeks. Here the flattering unction was often laid; and though as regards Cicero and Demosthenes, the inevitably selected champions, we may hardly think the match an equal one, it must be remembered that the extraordinary, and not quite comprehensible, loss of nearly all other Roman orators puts Latin at a very great disadvantage. We have Æschines, Lysias, Isæus, something, if

[1] Ep., ix. 17.

not much, of Hyperides, a good deal of Isocrates, on the literary side of oratory. But we have nothing by which fairly to judge Hortensius or Catulus, Calvus or Pollio or Messala. What is certain is that men of cool judgment, who did not venture to set up even Virgil against Homer, and who practically let all Roman minor poetry go by the board, did think they could make a fight for Rome in symbouleutic and dikanic, if not in epideictic, oratory.

It follows from all these things that, strong as is the oratorical preoccupation in Greek, it is stronger still in Roman Rhetoric and criticism. Even the men who take the widest view of literature, and are most familiar with it—Cicero, Pliny, nay, Quintilian himself—fall, as has been said, unconsciously, or in the way of bland assumption as of a matter not worth arguing about, into the habit of regarding it either primarily as an exercising-ground, a magazine, a source of supply and training for the orator, or as a means of sport and pastime to him in the intervals of his more serious business. The utterly preposterous notion (as it seems to us) of trying a poet like Virgil by the rules of the rhetorician, classifying his speeches, pointing out his deft use of "means of persuasion," laying stress on the proprieties and felicities of his use of language according to the rhetorical laws, taking examples of Figures from him and the like, could arise from nothing but this preliminary assumption or confusion, and could only be excused by it. It is in fact all-pervading—forget or lose sight of it, and there is hardly a Roman utterance about literature which will not be either quite unmeaning, or very seriously misleading.

The consequence is that very seldom do we get literary criticism of anything like the best kind—of any kind that deserves the name in meaning at once full and strict—from a Roman. There is no Latin Longinus—Quintilian himself is but at best a rather less technical Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and it is even very uncertain whether he does not owe a good deal directly to Dionysius himself. At any rate, much as we owe him, we owe it rather to his ineradicable and inevitable good sense, his thorough grasp of the educational values of things, and his unfeigned love of literature, than to any full conception

on his part of the art of criticism as an art of appreciation—as a reasoned valuing and analysing of the sources of literary charm.

Another consequence (of the illustrative kind chiefly) is that the spell of the Figures is even more heavy on the Roman than on the Greek. That horrified cry[1] of the unlucky Albucius, *schemata tollis ex rerum natura*, is as much the note of the average Roman critic as the quotation given above from Simylus[2] is above the note both of Roman and even of Greek as a rule. It could hardly out of the head of a critic of this stamp, that if you took the proper number of scruples of hyperbole, so many drams of antiphrasis, and so on, you would make a fine sentence—that so many sentences thus formed and arranged, with proper regard to *inventio, narratio*, and the rest, would make a fine chapter, so many chapters a fine book. The whole process, once more, is topsy-turvy, and can come to no good end.

In Poetic of the limited kind we have, of course, from Rome one document, the historical importance of which it is impossible to exaggerate. But the intrinsic importance, even of this, is singularly out of proportion to its reputation and its influence. As has been explained in detail above, it may be unjust to regard the *Epistola ad Pisones* as a designed and complete tract *De Arte Poetica*. But make as much allowance as we may and can for scheme and purpose, the intrinsic quality of such criticism as it does give will remain clear and unaltered. Neither of the real nature, requirements, capabilities of any one literary form, nor of the character of any one source of literary beauty, does Horace show himself in the very least degree conscious. His precepts are now precepts of excellent common-sense, not less—perhaps rather more—applicable to life than to literature: now purely arbitrary rules derived from the practice—sometimes the quite accidental practice—of great preceding writers.

Yet, all the same, Horace unconsciously and almost indirectly does take up a very decided critical side, and expresses, with the neatness and in the rememberable fashion to be expected from

[1] *V. supra*, p. 238. [2] *V. supra*, p. 25.

so consummate a master, one of the two great critical creeds. Nor is there any doubt that this creed, so far as literary criticism appealed to the Roman mind at all, was that of by far the larger number of persons. This is—not necessarily in a *ne varietur* shape, but put very clearly in a certain form—the creed of what is known as "Classicism," the creed which recommends, first of all, as the probable, if not the certain, road to literary success, adherence to the approved traditions, the elaboration of types and generalisations rather than indulgence in the eccentric and efforts to create the individual, the preference of the regular to the vague, &c., &c.

This, it may be repeated without much rashness, was even more the critical orthodoxy of Rome than it was the critical orthodoxy of Greece. We see it in the stock preference of the Attic to the Asiatic style in oratory; it simply defrays the whole of the just-mentioned criticism of Horace; it animates the campaign of the satirists against archaic and euphuist phraseology; it is clearly the proper thing to think in the literary miscellanies of Gellius, and even of Macrobius. The precepts of the formal treatises, so far as they touch on style at all, never fail to express this general tendency; and the even more deliberate and canonical "correctness" of the modern Latin races and literatures, if not directly and unavoidably inherited, is a very legitimate attempt to recover and improve the lost heritage of their ancestor.

Nor will any other conclusion, I think, be drawn from the study of those grammarians in the strict sense, of whom little or nothing has been said in the main body of this Book, for the simple reason that there was little or nothing to say. From Varro to Festus the symptoms which we have noted elsewhere recur with unmistakable fidelity. The etymology and signification of words; the explanation of customs, rites, myths; the arrangements of accidence and syntax—all these things awake evident interest, and receive careful and often most intelligent pains. These grammarians (and, of course, still more professedly metrical writers like Terentianus Maurus) are diligent on metre, and even behind metre, on that most difficult of subjects, in all times and languages, the metrical quality and

quantity as distinguished from the metrical arrangement of words. But where all these things begin to group and crystallise themselves into higher criticism of literary form and charm, there our authors, I think it will be found with hardly an exception, stop dead. I shall be surprised (to stick to the example formerly given) to have pointed out to me a single passage in which the *poetical* quality of the Ennian, the Lucretian, and the Virgilian hexameter is discussed.

At the same time, it would be uncritical not to perceive, and unhistorical not to note, the existence in the history of Latin literature of a current running strongly in the opposite direction, making itself distinctly felt at more than one period, and, finally, in creative literature at least, going near to triumph. We have seen, both directly and indirectly, that in the first century of our era there *was* a very strong set towards archaism and euphuism, that it had the patronage of Seneca the father, certainly, if not also that of his more famous and more influential son; that it was not by any means wholly disapproved by Pliny; and that though what we may call literary orthodoxy was against it, a very large bulk (perhaps the great majority) of the prose declamations and the verse exercises of the time must have exhibited its influence. What is more, it is certain that in more than one of the Roman colonial or provincial districts, which furnished fresher and more vigorous blood than the Eternal City herself, or her Italian precinct, could now supply, this tendency received very strong accessions from various local peculiarities. It seems to have been least prevalent in Gaul, though by no means unknown there; the Senecas, and Quintilian himself, show at what an early date Spanish blood or birth inclined those who had it to what was long afterwards to take names from Guevara and Gongora. But the great home of Roman Euphuism was Africa. To say nothing of ecclesiastical writers like Tertullian (who might be supposed to have their style affected by Eastern influences), Apuleius earlier, and Martianus later, are more than sufficient, and luckily pretty fully extant, witnesses to the fact.

Yet this tendency is not represented in criticism at all. Apuleius, who was a very pretty pleader as well as an accom-

plished Euphuist in original composition, might well have left us a parallel to De Quincey's own vindications of the ornate style, if he had chosen; but it did not apparently occur to him though the *Floridâ* would have given a quite convenient and proper home to such a dissertation.[1] *Con amore* as Martianus describes (in the passage above translated) the gorgeousness of Rhetoric, it is strictly in reference to her *oratorical* practice. If the satires of the later Cæsars' time take the other side, and so do give us some criticism on that, it is pretty certainly because all the greatest satirists, from Aristophanes downwards, have always been Tories, and have selected the absurdities of innovation more gladly than those of tradition for their target. Nay, it is a question whether Petronius, in one direction, and Persius in another, do not, so far as their own compositions are concerned, somewhat incur the blame of which they are so lavish, though Martial and Juvenal certainly do not. On all sides the conviction comes in that for strictly literary criticism the time was not ripe, or that the country, the nation, was indisposed and unprepared for it.

In no point, perhaps, is this so noteworthy and so surprising as in regard to what we may call the literary criticism of metre. For this Latin offered, at both ends of the history of Latin proper, temptations and opportunities which, so far as we know, were unknown to the Greeks. At the one end there were the remains, scanty, but significant even now, then probably abundant, of "Saturnian" prosody. Of this, of course, Roman writers, technical and other, do take notice: they even, with the antiquarian and mythological patriotism so common at Rome, take a fairly lively interest in it. But of the remarkable *literary* difference between it and the accepted literary metres—a point almost exactly on a par with that of the difference between our ballad metre and the accepted literary poetic forms of the eighteenth century—they do not, so far as I remember, seem to have taken any notice at all. There must have been—in fact we know perfectly well that there were—Roman literary

[1] The fact that the subject not seldom seems to be coming (*e.g.*, at i. 9 and iv. 20) in this curious patchwork, and does not come, is not without significance.

antiquaries as diligent, as enthusiastic, and, no doubt, at least as intelligent as any of our own, from Percy and Hurd to Tyrwhitt and Ritson. There is no reason in the nature of things (indeed, Varro is a very fair analogue to the historian of English poetry) why there should not have been Romans of the calibre at least of Warton, if not even of Gray. But hardly a vestige of the combined antiquarian, philological, and literary interest, which animates all these men of ours, appears in the extant fragments of any Roman writer.

The facts at the other end point to the same conclusion. From no Roman critic, so far as I know, have we any notice whatsoever of that insurrection or resurrection (whichever word may be preferred) of accentual against quantitative rhythm which is one of the most interesting, and certainly one of the most mysterious, phenomena of the literary history of the world. Grant that early in the third century (if that be the right date) no cultivated student was likely to pay much attention to the barbarous rhythms of a Commodian,[1] to be prepared even to consider

"Audite quoniam propheta de illo prædixit"

as a hexameter. But a hundred and fifty years later things were different. Before Macrobius wrote, before Servius commented, the verse of Prudentius had been given to the world. Now, the mere classical scholar has no doubt been usually

[1] The edition of the *Instructiones* and the *Carmen Apologeticum* which I use is the most accessible, and I think the most recent, that of E. Ludwig (two parts, Leipsic, 1877-78). But I must own that a certain compunction invades me at finding any fault with the shortcomings of ancient critics, when I find in this edition, at the end of the nineteenth century, great care about the text, but not a single word about the date, the person, or the circumstances of Commodianus, and an utter ignoring of the literary position and interest of the matter edited. Commodian's form may be barbarous, and his matter may be respectably ordinary; but he is, at any rate, on a not yet disturbed hypothesis, the ancestor — or the earliest example — of the prosody of every modern language which combines (as some at least of us hold that all modern languages do) quantitative scansion with a partly or wholly non-quantitative syllabic value. And one might at least have expected a few facts, if not a little discussion, to butter the bread of the bare text in such a case. But the fetish of the letter has been too much for this editor also.

unkind to Prudentius,[1] but few people who have read him without a fixed idea that anybody who writes in Latin is bound to confirm to the prosody of the Augustan age, can have read him without frequent satisfaction. At any rate, he is a literary *person*, and his personality is emphasised by the fact that at one time he tries to write, and not infrequently succeeds in writing, very fair orthodox hexameters and trimeters, at others (and in the best work of the *Cathemerinon* and *Peristephanon*) his verse, whether answering to the test of the finger or not in metre, is clearly accentual in rhythm, and seems to be yearning for rhyme to complete and dress it. Now, if literary criticism in the full sense had been common, such a phenomenon must have attracted attention. The orthodox critics would have attacked it as furiously as the orthodox critics in England attacked Coleridge's system of metrical equivalence, or the orthodox critics in France attacked Victor Hugo's *enjambements*. The unorthodox critics, the revolutionary and romantic party, would, as in each case, have welcomed it with pæans. But, so far as we know, not the slightest notice was taken of Prudentius by the literary wits of the *Saturnalia*, or by any one else.

In part, no doubt, this silence may be set down to accidental and extra-literary causes. The very growth of provincial literatures would at once have rendered the productions of these literatures less likely to reach Rome, and have disinclined the literary critics of the capital to listen to provincial productions. Even the debate of Christian and Pagan,[2] as it became more and more of a conflict between triumphant youth and declining eld, less and less of the resurrection of a desperate and despised minority against established order, may have had something to do with the matter. But, however this may be, the facts are the facts.

[1] I use the Delphin edition, but I believe the standards are those of Obbarius (Tubingen, 1845) or Dressel (Leipsic, 1860). A good deal of work which has not yet come in my way seems to have been recently spent on this most interesting writer, resulting in such things as the first part of a *Lexicon Prudentianum* (Bermann, Upsala, 1891), a book on illustrated MSS. of him (Stettener, Berlin, 1895), while in England Mr Bridges has translated some of his charming hymns.

[2] Symmachus, the great defender of Virgil in the *Saturnalia*, was an obstinate and audacious champion of Paganism against Christianity: and Prudentius wrote directly against him.

We shall do well to accept them as they are, and to recognise that Latin had the criticism which it deserved, the criticism which was made necessary by the conditions of its own classical literature, and, lastly, the criticism which was really most useful both for itself and for its posterity—that is to say, in greater or less degree, not merely the so-called Romance tongues, but all the literary languages of modern Europe. The first two points must be tolerably clear to any tolerable Latinist, but they may be freshly put. A literature like classical Latin, which is from first to last *in statu pupillari*, which, with whatever strength, deftness, elegance, even originality at times, follows in the footsteps of another literature, must for the very life of it have a critical creed of order, discipline, moderation. Otherwise it runs the risk of being a mere hybrid, even a mere monstrosity.

Still more certainly, nothing could have been better for the future of the world than the exact legacy which Latin left, not merely in its great examples of literature, but in the forms of the scholastic Grammar and Rhetoric, to that millennium of reconstruction and recreation which is called the Middle Age. For that wonderful period—which even yet has never been put in its right place in the history of the world—a higher lesson would have been thrown away, or positively injurious. No instruction in Romanticism was wanted by the ages of Romance: for full literary knowledge of the ancient literatures they were in no wise suited or prepared. Their business was, after a long period of mere foundation-work in the elaboration of the modern speeches, to get together the materials of the modern literatures, and to build up the structure of these as well as they could. So strongly did they feel the *nisus* towards this, that they even travestied into their own likeness such of the old literature as remained.

But still Grammar and Rhetoric abode—to be a perpetual grounding and tutelage, a "fool-guard" and guide-post in these ages of exploration and childhood. That the Rhetoric was meagre and arbitrary, that a great deal of it had nothing to do with literature at all, but was a sort of fossilised skeleton of a bygone philosophy, or else a mere business training, mattered

nothing. The Trivium and Quadrivium, the legacies of the classics, especially of Latin, gave in every one of their divisions, and not least in Rhetoric, precisely the formal stays, the fixed norms and forms of method, which were required in the general welter.,

Had the appreciative criticism of Latin been stronger and wider, had it left any tradition in its own last age, and so been able to throw that tradition as a bridge over the dark time to come, it would have been no advantage, but a loss and a mischief. Not only would it have been waste of time for the Middle Ages to appreciate Greek and Latin literature critically, if they could have done so, but it would have hampered them in the doing of their own great day's, or rather night's, work—their work of assimilation, of recuperation, and, not least, of dream.

BOOK III

MEDIÆVAL CRITICISM

"Sola vocabula nobilissima in cribro tuo residere curabis."

—DANTE.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE DANTE.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDIÆVAL LITERATURE—ITS ATTITUDE TO CRITICISM—IMPORTANCE OF PROSODY—THE EARLY FORMAL RHETORICS: BEDE—ISIDORE—ALCUIN (?)—ANOTHER TRACK OF INQUIRY—ST AUGUSTINE A PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC—HIS ATTITUDE TO LITERATURE BEFORE AND AFTER HIS CONVERSION—ANALYSIS OF THE 'CONFESSIONS' FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW—A CONCLUSION FROM THIS TO THE GENERAL PATRISTIC VIEW OF LITERATURE — SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS — HIS ELABORATE EPITHET-COMPARISON AND MINUTE CRITICISMS OF STYLE AND METRE—A DELIBERATE CRITIQUE—CASSIODORUS—BOETHIUS—CRITICAL ATTITUDE OF THE FIFTH CENTURY—THE SIXTH: FULGENTIUS—THE FULGENTII AND THEIR BOOKS—THE 'SUPER THEBAIDEN' AND 'EXPOSITIO VIRGILIANA'—VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS—ISIDORE OF SEVILLE AGAIN—BEDE AGAIN—HIS 'ARS METRICA'—THE CENTRAL MIDDLE AGES TO BE MORE RAPIDLY PASSED OVER—PROVENÇAL AND LATIN TREATISES—THE 'DE DICTAMINE RHYTHMICO'—JOHN OF GARLANDIA—THE 'LABYRINTHUS'—CRITICAL REVIEW OF POETS CONTAINED IN IT—MINOR RHYTHMICAL TRACTATES—GEOFFREY DE VINSAUF: HIS 'NOVA POETRIA.'

It may seem a platitude, but it really has much more of the altitudinous than of the platitudinous about it, to say that, before entering on the consideration of mediæval criticism,[1] it is above all things necessary to clear the mind of cant about mediæval literature. For in no division of this work is such a

[1] As at the beginning of Bk. ii. I had less obligation to acknowledge than at that of Bk. i., so here also the diminution continues. On the general subject it approaches zero. Théry himself is more sketchy than himself here; and has practically nothing in detail to say of any one save Raymond Lully, who does not supply *us* with anything, though he brought Rhetoric, like other sciences, into his philosophic scheme. Even in regard to individuals, it is only on Dante that I know of much precedent treatment, and for that *v. infra.*

caution a more appropriate writing on the door. On the classical and on the modern sections it would be a gratuitous impertinence. In both of them, as here, there is the distinction between linguistic and literary criticism, and the further distinction between literary criticism of different kinds. But in both there are, as there always have been in relation to the classics, and as there sometimes have been in relation to modern literature, a very large number of persons who are aware of the *crevasses*, and who can cross them.

Characteristics of mediæval literature.

In mediæval literature such persons are, and for the strongest reasons, much more to seek. Until recently—it is the greatest "refusal" and the greatest misfortune in the literary history of the world—mediæval literature, which some, at least, believe to hold the keys of both ancient and modern, was utterly neglected and contemned. Then, for a time, it was praised without full knowledge, or by divination only. It is now possible to know much if not most of it; but few are they who are content to know it as literature. Not only has it had to go through, all at once, the usual diseases to which literary childhood is obnoxious, the petty grammarianisms which Latin and Greek got over in their own time, the squabbles as to interpretation from which the Renaissance, to a great extent, delivered us in their case, and the criticastry of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, but new ailments, diphtherias and influenzas of its own, have arisen in "phonology," and Heaven knows what else. Even this does not exhaust the list of ills that wait upon its most unhappy state. It has been thought necessary, for political and ecclesiastical reasons, to praise the Middle Ages a little unwisely for a time, and then (more recently) to abuse them with an unwisdom so much greater, that one feels inclined to relapse upon the mood of the real Mr Kenelm Digby of *The Broad Stone of Honour*, and the imaginary Mr Chainmail of *Crotchet Castle*. Abused and extolled as "Ages of Faith," they were really ages of a mixture of logical argument and playful half-scepticism. Regarded with scorn as "Ages of Ignorance," they knew what they did, know thoroughly, which is more than can be said of some others. Commiserated as Ages of Misery, they

were probably the happiest times of the world, putting Arcadia and Fairyland out of sight. Patronised as Ages of mere preparation, they accomplished things that we have toiled after in vain for some five hundred years. They have in the rarest cases been really understood, even historically. And the understanding which has, in these rare cases, reached their history, has almost always merely scrabbled on the doors of their literature. There are exceptions, of course, some of whom have taught me all I know, and whom I honour only short of the great originals. But they are still exceptions.

Its attitude to criticism.

Lest any one should accuse me of passing from criticism into dithyrambic, let me acknowledge at once that whatsoever the Middle Ages were or were not, they were certainly not Ages of Criticism. They could not — it has already been hinted—have been anything of the kind; it would have ruined their business and choked their vocation if they had attempted to be so. One mighty figure does indeed show himself in their midst, to pass on the torch from Aristotle and Longinus, through unknowing ages, to Coleridge and Sainte-Beuve. But their very essence was opposed to criticism in any prevalence. The incorrigible and triumphant (though or because wholly unconscious) originality which, in practice, created the Romance, revolutionised the Drama, altered History, devised a fresh Lyric, would have been constrained and paralysed in the face of theory. At no time can we be so thankful for the shortcomings of the School Rhetoric which, if it had been better, might have done frightful harm. Had the Italian critics, with their warpings of Plato and of Aristotle, appeared in the thirteenth century instead of the sixteenth, it might have been all over with us. For the thirteenth century was docile: the sixteenth, fortunately, was not.

Importance of prosody.

In one particular, however, the comparatively scanty criticism of the thousand years from the sack of Rome by Alaric to the fall of Constantinople before Mahomet, acquires a new significance. We have hitherto said little about the formal criticism of prosody, and for good reasons. The Greek, and in a less degree the Latin, writers on Metric, are interesting, but their interest is hardly literary at all, though it

has so much to do with literature. Before we have any finished classical literature from them, Greek had by its own *euphuia* acquired, and Latin had forced on itself by a stern process of gymnastic, systems of prosody which, though in the former case at least easy as nature, were in both cases simply a branch of mathematics. The decay of Greek, the bursting by the strong Italian wine of the earthen or leathern vessel of artificial prosody which had so long contained it, and the rise of the new vernaculars, introduced a perfectly different situation; and the criticism, the tentative unscientific rule-of-thumb criticism, of prosody assumed an importance, at about the beginning of the fifth century of our era, which it has not lost on the eve of the twentieth. But these general questions will be further treated at the close of this Book (see Interchapter iii.) We must now turn to the details of the actual history.

The early formal Rhetorics—Bede.

The standard collection[1] of Latin Rhetorics contains four of very early date, speaking from our present point of view. The oldest, and, if it were genuine, the most interesting, of all in point of authorship, that attributed to S. Augustine, we shall—for reasons—take last. The others, still of great interest in this respect, are by, or attributed to, the three greatest men of "regular" letters in the whole period (500-1000), except Scotus Erigena—to wit, Bede, Isidore of Seville, and Alcuin.

Bede, who has also left us work of interest on metre,[2] has included in his works a tractate on the Tropes and Figures of the Holy Scriptures which gives us, at least, a glimmer in darkness. His argument is characteristic of his time; but nobody except a churl, and an ignorant and foolish churl, will smile at it. The Figures are the most important things in style; the Scriptures are the most important of books; therefore there must be as good Figures in the Scriptures as in any other book, and better. He uses, to prove his point, seventeen figures with examples.

[1] Ed. Capperonnier, pp. 318-328; pp. 375-409. Ed. Halm, i. 137-151; ii. 505-550, 607-618. The *Rhetoric* (forming part of his *Institutiones*) of Cassiodorus is also in both collections. It has been glanced at, *supra* (pp. 346, 349), and will be noticed again, *infra* (p. 390).

[2] *V. infra*, p. 403.

In what follows, the chief point of interest is that he first quotes classical examples (chiefly from Virgil) and then Scriptural analogues. But he does not by any means confine himself to the chosen seventeen.

The critical importance of this, for its time especially, can be shown with little labour. The great danger, the great curse, so to say, of uncritical reading, is the taking of things as a matter of course, and the neglect to analyse and ascertain the exact causes and sources of literary excellence. Now, in itself, the comparison of the Bible and the classics, from the hard-and-fast point of view of a scholastic classification of Figures, is a very small matter—and not perhaps even a very good matter. But when these two so different things are compared, from any point of view no matter what, the curiosity is aroused; the mind begins to consider what it really *does* think fine in this and that; and in happy circumstances and cases a real—in any perhaps some approach to a real—appreciation of the goodness of literature will result. Bede did not intend this—he might have left no pepper to any one who suggested it to him, as a consequence of his work. But such a consequence at least might follow.

Isidore.

The references of that great authority of the early Middle Ages, Isidore of Seville, to Rhetoric are not copious, and are chiefly made up of the already consecrated tags, while the subject is somewhat mixed with Logic. The orator is the *vir bonus dicendi peritus;* the parts of Rhetoric are as usual, its kinds likewise. The forensic side is almost exclusively prominent, and style has hardly any attention at all.[1]

Alcuin (?).

Very much more curious is the dialogue with Charlemagne, attributed to Alcuin or Albinus. The emperor-king, in a rather precious but not inelegant style, beseeches instruction on the point; and his teacher, with grandiosity suitable (at least on the estimate of Martianus) to the subject, protests that the spark of his little intellect can add nothing to the flame-vomiting light of the emperor's

[1] But see below (p. 400) for other contributions of Isidore to our subject.

genius,[1] but will obey his commands, *juxta auctoritatem veterum.* In fact, he follows the usual lines, with occasional indulgence in the curiously, and rather barbarically, but sometimes not unpleasantly, ornate style which seems to have pleased the youthful nations of modern Europe. The hard cases of the old Declamations make a considerable appearance — in fact, very much more of the dialogue (which, is neither very long nor very short) is devoted to this side of the matter than is the case with Bede and Isidore; and there is even a slight glance into the subject of Fallacies. The passage on Elocution may be scrutinised, not perhaps with very great results, but with some interest and profit, not merely because it directly concerns us, but also because one may at least hope to have the *auctoritas veterum* qualified by a little personal and temporal colour. From attention to style comes *venustas* to the cause, and *dignitas* to the orator. It must be *facunda et aperta* — that is to say, grammatically correct and clearly arranged. The best authors must be read, and their example followed. In choosing single words (here the characteristic above-mentioned may be thought to appear, while the sentiment, and even the phrase, though of course not new, leads us interestingly on to the great work of Dante) we ought to choose *electa et illustria.* Metaphor (*translatio*) brings ornament; as the first object of clothing is to keep the cold out, and then we make it ornamental, so, &c. In fact, metaphor is now quite common — the very vulgar speak of the vines "gemming," the harvest being "luxuriant," the crops "waving": for what can hardly be described by a "proper" word is illustrated by a metaphor. Metaphors make things clearer, as "the sea *shivers*"; and sometimes save a periphrasis, as "the dart *flies* from the hand." But you must be careful only to use honest metaphors; and here the old illustrations recur. Special figures are slightly touched, though Metonymy and Synecdoche occur. The remarks on Composition are very meagre, chiefly deprecating

[1] *Licet flammivomo tuæ sapientiæ lumini scintilla ingenioli mei nil addere possit.* This was the kind of style wherewith the Dark Ages liked to lighten their darkness.

hiatus, the juxtaposition of similar syllables, &c. It is not unnoteworthy that much more time is spent on actual delivery, that no illustrations from the poets appear, and that the piece finishes with remarks on religious and moral virtue, of great excellence in themselves, but having very little to do with Rhetoric, save indirectly in the epideictic kind.

Another track of inquiry.

But it is unnecessary to hunt further through the formal Rhetorics which appeared during the Dark and earlier Middle Ages, though it may be proper to return to the subject in the chapter dealing with Criticism after Dante. Conservative in all their ways, though with a conservatism compatible with limitless expatiation and rehandling, these Ages were nowhere more conservative than in regard to Rhetoric; and Martianus by himself almost represents their manual thereof. The influence of the *Marriage of Philology*, which is prominent at the middle in the *Contention of Phyllis and Flora*,[1] appears again at the very close, when Hawes "rang to even-song," and it will dispense all but specialists from investigation under this head. We have seen how small is its contribution to criticism. We must therefore look elsewhere, and, throwing back a little to St Augustine, himself a Professor of Rhetoric, may endeavour to trace and pick up, often in bypaths, such windfalls of expression about literature as may enable us to compose something like a history, if not of definite and expressed Criticism, at any rate of Literary Taste, century by century, from the fourth to the thirteenth, through a chain of now almost wholly Christian writers.

St Augustine a Professor of Rhetoric.

It is probable, if not certain, that the *Principia Rhetorices*, which has been already referred to, and which we have under the name of Aurelius Augustinus, was never written or delivered by the chief of the Latin Fathers, at Tagaste or at Carthage, at Milan or at Rome. The loss to him is certainly not great. The

[1] This very agreeable Latin verse debate on the merits of knights and clerks as lovers, which had so long a popularity that it was paraphrased by Chapman on the eve of the seventeenth century, dates originally, it would seem, from the twelfth. It may be found in Wright's *Poems of Walter Mapes*, p. 258 (London, 1841), or in *Carmina Burana*, p. 155 (3rd ed., Breslau, 1894).

treatise, which is short (some ten quarto pages in Capperonnier), is based upon, and apparently to a large extent quoted or stolen from, Hermagoras, Cicero's Rhodian master. It busies itself first with the nature of Rhetoric, and the calumnies brought against it, and proceeds to the examination of technicalities, not dictionary-fashion, as had lately become usual, but continuously. Perhaps the sole argument (a worthless one enough, for there were probably ten thousand professors of Rhetoric doing the same thing in his time) for the Saint's authorship is, that no book could better answer to his own bitter description of his worldly profession as "selling words to boys."

His attitude to literature before and after his conversion.

But he *was* a Professor of Rhetoric, and therefore, in a way, of literature; and the decisive, because in most cases unintentional, evidence of the *Confessions*[1] touches our subject closely and frequently. We can not only see what was Augustine's attitude to literature even before his conversion, but from his attitude to it after that event we can, without rashness or unfairness, discern the causes which make one huge and important division of late ancient and early mediæval literature — the works of the Fathers of the Church — almost a blank for our special purpose.

Analysis of the Confessions *from this point of view.*

That Augustine as a little boy (*Conf.*, I. 13) hated Greek and loved Latin, especially the Latin poets,[2] has nothing in it more marvellous than that any healthy English boy should hate Latin and love (it is to be hoped that he still does love) *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Gulliver*, and the *Morte d'Arthur*, and the *Faerie Queene*. And there is, no doubt, some allowance to be made for that "megalomania" of repentance which besets the strongly religious, in his regrets for the tears he shed over dead Dido, neglectful of his own death in life as far as the soul was concerned.[3] But his attitude to

[1] The editions of the *Confessions*, Latin and English, are so numerous that I refer to none in particular, but quote book and chapter throughout.

[2] For poor little Roman boys had no *prose* Defoes or Marryats.

[3] Virgil was of course popular everywhere. But, as we have seen, he was

literature, as expressed in this chapter and onwards, is suggestive not merely of religiosity, but of a certain antiquarian priggishness. Will not even the "sellers of grammar" confess that nobody knows when Æneas came to Carthage, while the more learned know that he never did? Which is the more useful, reading and writing *per se*, or the figments of poetry? Homer, though full of "sweetly idle fiction," was bitter to him, because he was difficult. And then he returns to the other line, wherein, it must be confessed, he had strong pagan as well as Christian support.

Do not the poets assign vices to the gods, or rather give the divine title to wicked men? (cap. 16.) Does not Terence actually make one of his characters shelter his own sin under Jove's example? How absurd it was, if not worse, to have to learn by heart the wrath of Juno at her ill-success in thwarting Æneas! Nay, he proceeds to further altitudes. Grammar is more carefully observed than the Law of God. Rhetoric helps you to do harm to human beings. His own father spent more money than he could afford on sending him to Madaura and Carthage for education, but was wholly indifferent to his spiritual welfare (Book II. cap. iii.) His success in the Rhetoric school (III. 2) filled him with wicked pride. He even liked stage plays; was so wretchedly mad as to grieve at their falsehoods and shadows, and so wicked as to sympathise with the imaginary but immoral enjoyments of lovers. He read Cicero's *Hortensius* with admiration, but for its wisdom, not its form. His own professorship of Rhetoric was a "covetous selling of tricks to conquer," though he himself would not fee a wizard to gain a dramatic prize. He wrote a treatise, *De Apto et Proprio*, which we (like him) have not, but which was evidently, if criticism at all, criticism in the abstract. Although he refers often (*e.g.*, V. 7) to his lectures on literature, he gives us hardly a notion of his literary preferences, estimates, views; and his Manichæan difficulties, his agonies about the origin of evil,

specially popular in Roman Africa, because of the local patriotism (the strongest sentiment of ancient times) which laid hold of the story of the hapless Queen of Carthage. I have sometimes thought that much of the origin of Romance may be traced to this. For Africa, till the Mahometan Deluge, was the most literary quarter of the late Roman world.

seem to have drawn him further and further from anything but a mere professional connection with the subject. In his high eulogium of Victorinus (VIII. 2) it can hardly be said that he says a word about his literature. In all his allusions to his Chair he constantly refers to the oratorical, or rather the debating and advocating, not the literary side. And what to me seems the most conclusive and remarkable point of all, the long discourse of sinful, or at least worldly, pleasures with which Book Ten closes, contains not a reference to the pleasures of literature, which, as we know from the beginning, he did think ungodly. They have apparently not importance enough to be taken into consideration, not merely in connection with the pleasures of sense (where there might be a reason for their omission), but along with curiosity, love of praise, fear of blame, vainglory, self-conceit, and other purely intellectual temptations. The boy had been charmed by Virgil and Terence—wicked charms he acknowledges—but the man, though he certainly does not mean to deny their wickedness, has simply put them away as childish things.

A conclusion from this to the general patristic view of literature.

I have thought it well to be somewhat particular in regard to this appearance of what we may call the Puritan attitude to literature, in its earliest and perhaps almost its greatest exponent. It is of course not entirely new —nothing indeed is ever that; and it is not merely foreshadowed, but to a certain extent fathered, by the Platonic views of poetry, and the Academic and Pyrrhonist views of literature generally. But these older things here acquire an entirely new character and importance—a character and an importance which can hardly be said to be merely matters of history yet. Moreover, as I have hinted above, the attitude is that—varied only by the personal factor—of all the Fathers, more or less, until, and for some time after, the complete downfall of Paganism, and of the great majority of ecclesiastical writers for a thousand years later still.

Its justifications, or at least its excuses, have been often put, and must in great measure be allowed. Not merely had it, as has been said, a most respectable pedigree in purely Pagan philosophy, but, as a fighting creed, it was almost indispensable

to the Church Militant. Literature, and Heathen religion, and the Seven Deadly Sins, were, it might even seem, inextricably connected. If you wrote an epic you had to begin with Jove or some other false god; if you wrote a parcel of epigrams it was practically *de rigueur* to accuse somebody of unnatural vices, or affect a partiality for them yourself. But even if things had been better—if there had been no danger of relapses in faith, and none of the worst kind in practice—it was inevitable that the poor Fine Arts should seem vain and trifling exercises to that intense "otherworldliness" which had come (as no doubt it will at some time or other have to come again) as an alternative to secular absorption in things secular. To Augustine, as to monk and homilist long afterwards, not merely was the theology of literature false, and its morals detestable, but it was —merely as occupation—frivolous and puerile, a thing unworthy not only of a Christian but even of a reasonable being. We shall have to count with so much of this in the present book (and not there only) that it seemed worth while to take note of it at the outset. It probably did no great harm, for, as has been repeated more than once, what was wanted was a new development of literature, as fresh and as spontaneous as possible: and this might have been more hindered than helped by too great a devotion to the old. Meanwhile the Seven Liberal Arts were not much interfered with, either by the Seven Deadly Sins or by their opponent Virtues, and the mere necessities of preaching and homily-writing, of controversy with heretics, and of historical summaries, obliged to practise in the more scholastic branches of literature itself. As for the less scholastic, they came soon enough, and more than well enough, as the rains of heaven descended and the wind of the Spirit blew—the Northern wind.

In such a state of mind literary criticism, though the fact is not even yet universally recognised, is practically impossible. It is the furthest stage, and to some extent the converse, of the famous fallacy—stated once by a critic[1] of great though one-

[1] Peacock, in *Gryll Grange*. The utterance is of course dramatic, not direct, but the character in whose mouth it is put obviously expresses the author's sentiments.

sided ability, and probably accepted, tacitly or implicitly, by the majority of critics still—that a man "must take pleasure in the thing represented before he can take pleasure in the representation." Here the assumption is that, if you take pleasure in the representation, you take pleasure in the thing represented. And there is more also. Not only are the subjects of literature in part men or devils masquerading as gods, in part men committing more or less shameful acts; but, even when they are in themselves unobjectionable, they are idle fiction, there is no truth or usefulness in them. Men with immortal souls to be saved or lost should at the worst be horrified at touching such pitch, at the best be ashamed of burdening themselves with such trumpery. Great as is St Augustine's genius for producing literature, one doubts whether he had much taste for estimating it. The story of the famous pears, which he stole, comes in rather fatally pat. He stole them, he says, not because he wanted them or liked them, but because it was naughty to do it. This, though no uncommon mood, is the worst possible for the critic. It leads him, in the same way, to praise a book or an author, not because he really likes them, but because they are naughty—the reverse of the other fallacy and its punishment.

Taking this fact into consideration, and adding to it the facts already glanced at,—the sickness incidental to the moulting of language, the want of helpfulness in such ancient critics as were likely to fall in the writer's way, the increasing scarcity, for hundreds of years, of books, and other things of the same kind,—it will be seen to have been not nearly but wholly impossible that the Dark and the Early Middle Ages could produce much criticism—or any, strictly speaking. The importance of what they did produce, with the much greater importance of the wholly new material they offered (to be long slighted by the critical world), will be considered at length in the Interchapter succeeding this Book. In the course of the Book itself we shall have to consider a few rhetorical and art-poetical treatises, entirely in Latin, between the sixth century and the thirteenth, the solitary document of the *De vulgari Eloquio* at the central point of the history, and perhaps some

more *Rhetorics* and *Poetics*, now dealing in increasing measure for moderns with the modern tongues, between 1300 and 1500. But we shall derive most of our material, and almost all the more interesting part of it, from incidental expressions on literary matters in books not professedly rhetorical or critical. And, taking century by century and beginning with the Fifth, we are lucky in finding at once, in the latter part of this, an interesting and half-famous writer who stands at the gate of the Dark Ages, but is something of a Janus, avowedly looking back on classical times, and, Christian as he is, admiring classical writers.

Sidonius Apollinaris.

The literary references in the works of Sidonius Apollinaris[1] are pretty numerous, and no small proportion of them possesses direct or indirect critical bearing. On the rather numerous occasions when the good count-bishop puts a little thing of his, in easy or flebile verse, into his letters, he by no means seldom prefaces or follows it with a little modest depreciation; he has not a few references to books and reading, and now and then he criticises in form. We could therefore hardly have a fairer chance of knowing what, at the very eleventh hour and fiftieth minute of the classical period, was the general state of literary taste in the West. That Sidonius was a very well-read man, not merely for his time, and that he had access not merely to most of the things that we have but to many that we have not, is sufficiently established by this evidence. And that he did not merely read but marked—that he endeavoured to shape a style for himself from his reading—is equally certain. Nor would it be any argument against his critical competence that this style is, if not exactly harsh, or even very barbarous, marked by the affectation and involution which seem to beset alike periods of immaturity and periods of decadence, and which were specially likely to affect a period of both at once.

But it is not easy to rank him very high. His critical utterances have a besetting tendency to run off into those epithet-tickets which have been referred to more than once, and which were the curse of the routine criticism of antiquity. Still, he is very

[1] Ed. Paulus Mohr, Leipsic, 1895.

interesting both for his position and for his intrinsic characteristics: and a selection from the passages bearing on the subject which I have noted in my reading may, as in former cases, be of service.

The very dedication of the Epistles to Constantius shows him to us as modestly endeavouring to follow, if without presumptuous footsteps, "the roundness of Symmachus, the discipline and maturity of Pliny," for he will not say a word of Cicero, referring only to an odd criticism of that master[1] by Julius Titianus, and to an expression of the school of Fronto, "the ape of the orators," applied to Titianus himself. The description[2] of the villa at Nîmes which, from Gibbon's[3] introduction of it, is perhaps better known than anything else of Sidonius, includes that of a library containing religious works arranged in cases among the armchairs of the ladies, and a collection of profane authors near the men's seats. Thus not merely Augustine, Prudentius, and the Latin translation of Origen by Rufinus, but Varro and Horace, received attention; while the excellence of Rufinus' work is brought out by a critical allusion to the translations by Apuleius of the *Phædo*, and by Cicero of the *De Corona*.

The metrical questions which were becoming of such immense critical importance, in consequence of the impingence of vernacular accent and rhythm on Latin, are frequently touched upon by Sidonius, not, of course, with a full (that was impossible), but with a fair, sense of their magnitude. He thinks, justly enough (Ep. ii. 10),[4] that "unless a remnant, at any rate,[5] vindicates the purity of the Latin tongue from the rust of barbarism, we shall soon have to bewail it as utterly abolished and made away with." And then he justifies himself for writing a "tumultuous poem" on the church of "Pope"[6] Patiens at Lyons in hendecasyllabics (which he seems oddly to call "trochaic triplets" here, as looking at the end only), because

[1] *Quem in stilo epistulari nec Julius Titianus sub nominibus illustrium feminarum dignum similitudine expressit.* Ep. i. 1, p. 1, ed. cit.

[2] Ep. ii. 9, p. 42.

[3] In a note to his account (ch. xxxvi.) of the Emperor Avitus, the father-in-law of our poet and epistoler.

[4] P. 44 *sq.*

[5] *Vel paucissimi.*

[6] Sidonius of course uses *papa* for "bishop" generally.

he wished not to vie with the hexameters of the eminent poets Constantius and Secundinus.

There is a glance in iii 3,[1] which may excite indignation in the apostles of the "Celtic Renascence," at the nobility of his correspondent "dropping its Celtic slough" and "imbuing itself, now with the style of oratory, now with Camenal measures" This was his brother-in-law Ecdicius, son of the Emperor Avitus The epithets come now in single spies, now in battalions In a very interesting letter (iv 3), addressed *Claudiano suo* (not, of course, the poet, who was dead before Sidonius was born), he says that if the "prerogative of antiquity" does not overwhelm him he will refuse, as equals, the gravity of Fronto and the thunder of the Apuleian weight, nay, both the Varros, both the Plinys. Then, after an equally hyperbolical praise in detail, he addresses Claudian's work as "O book, multifariously pollent! O language, not of a thin, but of a subtle mind! which neither bombasts itself out with hyperbolical effusion, nor is thinned to tameness by *tapeinosis*!" And later —

His elaborate epithet-comparison

"Finally, no one in my time has had such a faculty of expressing what he wished to express When he[2] launches out against his adversary he claims, of right, the *symbola* of the characters and studies of either tongue He feels like Pythagoras, he divides like Socrates, he explains[3] like Plato, he is pregnant like Aristotle, he coaxes like Æschines, and like Demosthenes is wroth, he has the Hortensian bloom of spring, and the fruitful summer[4] of Cethegus, he is a Curio in encouragement, and a Fabius in delay, a Crassus in simulation, and in dissimulation a Cæsar He 'suades' like Cato, *dis*suades like Appius, *per*suades like Tully. Yea, if we are to bring the holy fathers into comparison, he is instructive like Jerome, destructive like Lactantius, constructive like Augustine; he

[1] P 55

[2] "He" appears to be better than "it," as partly a personification of the book, partly a polite *deflection* of the flattery from the author

[3] Or perhaps "expatiates" is better for "*explicat*" as a contrast to *implicat* for Aristotle

[4] *Vernat . æstivat*, a favourite antithesis of conceit with Sidonius An alternative equivalent for it would be, of course, the *freshness* of spring and the *glow* of summer Nor does this exhaust the suggested pairs

soars like Hilary, and abases himself like John; reproves like Basil, consoles like Gregory; has the fluency of Orosius, and the compression of Rufinus; can relate like Eusebius, implore like Eucherius; challenges like Paulinus, and like Ambrose perseveres."

As for hymns "your commatic[1] is copious, sweet, lofty, and overtops all lyrical dithyrambs in poetical pleasantness and historical truth. And you have this special peculiarity, that while keeping the feet of your metres, the syllables of your feet, and the natures of your syllables, you can, in a scanty verse, include rich words within its limits, and the shortness of a restricted poem does not banish the length of a fully equipped prose phrase: so easily do you manage, with tiny trochees and tinier pyrrhics, to surpass, not merely the ternaries of the molossus and the anapæst, but even the fourfold combination of the epitrite and the pæon."

and minute criticisms of style and metre.

In this extravagant, but really interesting and important, passage, we may probably see the critical taste of the meeting of the fifth and sixth centuries—of the late classical and the Dark ages, at its best and most characteristic. Although the mere taste has lost the power of distinction, it retains distinguishing formulas. It has learnt, only too much by heart, certain stock ticket-epithets for distinguished writers, and it applies them fearlessly and, as far as rote goes, well. Secondly, we see that a not unimportant habit of comparison had grown up between the old Pagan and the new Christian literature. Thirdly, that Sidonius was well aware that all poets of his time by no means kept "the feet of their metres, and the syllables of their feet, and the natures of their syllables." And fourthly, that a lively sense of metrical *quality*—of the effects that a poet can get out of metre—existed in him. Fortunately, this sense survived and flourished: and it had almost everything to do with the formation of the prosody of the new languages.

[1] *Commaticus.* This word, originally employed of the alternate *threnos* of personage and chorus in Tragedy, passed, in rhetorical use, to the signification of "short-cut" clauses of prose, and later received a special application to poems (especially hymns) in very short lines.

The promise of the twelfth epistle of the same book,[1] which opens with a picture of the poet-bishop's son reading Terence (the *Hecyra*), while his father expounded the parallel passages in Menander's Ἐπιτρέπων. is not maintained. But the words, *Gaius Tacitus unus ex majoribus tuis*, opening another letter[2] to a certain Polemius, bring us once more close to literary matters, though only to hear that (in a characteristically Sidonian calculus) Polemius might vanquish, not only Tacitus in oratory but Ausonius (another, and perhaps more authentic, ancestor) in verse. If we had a few more details, the letter to Syagrius (v. 5) on his acquired skill in German speech[3] would be priceless; as it is, it is rather tantalising. But yet another list[4] of flattering comparative tickets is valuable because it refers in the main to lost authors. The diction of Sapaudus is *tam clara tam spectabilis*, that "the division of Palæmon,[5] the gravity of Gallio, the copiousness of Delphidius, the discipline of Agroecius, the strength of Alcimus and the tenderness of Adelphius, the rigour of Magnus and the sweetness of Victorius, are not only not superior but scarcely equal." And then, with a sort of apology for this hyperbolical catalogue, he cites the "acrimony" of Quintilian and the "pomp" of Palladius as perhaps comparable. The sixth and seventh books are, the first wholly, the second mainly, occupied with letters to bishops, of whose interest in literature Sidonius might not be sure, or to whom he might not care to parade his own. But the eighth[6] opens with one of those references to the nasty critics, the envious rivals and derogators, who play the part of Demades to Demosthenes and Antony to Cicero, and of whose likes we have perhaps heard from writers later than the Bishop of Clermont. Their "malice is clear while their diction is obscure," a play, of course, on the double meanings of *clarus* as "clear" and "illustrious," and of "obscure" as still observed. And the third letter of the same has reference to an accompany-

[1] P. 87.

[2] P. 89.

[3] *Immane narratu est quantum stupeam sermonis te Germanici notitiam tanta facilitate rapuisse*, pp. 108, 109.

[4] Ep. x. p. 114.

[5] No doubt Q. Remmius Palæmon, a very famous, very arrogant, and very immoral grammarian and schoolmaster, who flourished from Tiberius to Claudius, taught Quintilian, and is mentioned by Juvenal (vi. 451, vii. 215-219).

[6] P. 172.

ing translation of the *Life of Apollonius*, not straight from Philostratus, but as Taxius Victorianus did it from a recension by one Nicomachus—which the author depreciates as, by reason of haste, a confused and headlong and "Opic" translation, thrown out in a rough-and-ready draft.

A deliberate critique.

The eleventh[1] contains a much longer critical passage, of something the same character as that quoted and analysed above. The death of a certain Lampridius gives Sidonius an opportunity of copying one of the little things above noted, which had been composed in the lifetime of its subject, instead of an elegy, and of praising the Ciceronian, Virgilian, Horatian, and other accomplishments of that subject as usual. A prose eulogy follows—a passage among the best of its author's for the real feeling and force of its descant on the *necessitas abjecta nascendi, vivendi misera, dura moriendi*, in which we hear approaching the true Mediæval tone. The praise is by no means unmixed as far as character goes; it only approaches panegyric when it comes to the literary part. In orations, it seems, the defunct was "keen, round, well composed and well struck off,"[2] in poems "tender, good at various metres, and a cunning craftsman." His verses were "very exact but singularly varied both in foot and measure," his hendecasyllables were "smooth and knotless," his hexameters "detonating[3] and cothurned (fitted for the buskin)"; his elegiacs "now echoing, now recurrent, now joined at end and beginning by anadiplosis" (the "turn of words" in which the decadence bettered Ovid). In his "ethica dictio" (probably equal to "ethopoeia") he did not use words as they came, but selected "grand, beautiful, carefully polished" ones.[4] In controversy he was strong and nervous, in satire careful[5] and biting, in tragic passions fierce or plaintive, in

[1] P. 188 *sq.*

[2] *Acer, rotundus, compositus, excussus.* I am never quite certain whether these Sidonian collocations (see above, p. 385 *note*) ought not to be taken in pairs as antithetic double epithets, "round in its keenness, and well struck off in its composition."

[3] *Crepantes.*

[4] Here does Sidonius (though all unknowing, in the one case certainly, in the other all but certainly) repeat Longinus and anticipate Dante—a cry of the child in the night.

[5] *Sollicitus*, perhaps "actively harassing" his enemy.

comic urbane and multiform, in his fescennines showing the bloom of spring (we know this Euphuism) in his words, the warmth of summer in his wishes; watchful, economical, and "carminabund"[1] in bucolics, and in Georgics so rustical as to have nothing clownish about him. His epigrams aimed not at abundance but point; they were not shorter than a distich or longer than a quatrain; they were not seldom peppered, often honeyed, always salt. He followed Horace in swift iambics, weighty choriambics, supple Alcaics, inspired Sapphics. In short, into whatever form of expression his mind carried him, he was subtle, apt, instructed, most eloquent, a swan like to soar, with wings only inferior to those of Horace himself and Pindar. And envious fate has left us not a note of this swan's song![2]

We may close the account of the Sidonian criticism in prose with a mere reference to the curious list of symbolic gestures and features of the philosophers in ix. 9. His poems need not detain us; but reference should also be made to the verse enclosure in Epist. ix. 13, containing glosses on different metres[3] and poetic forms; to the exposition of "recurrent" verses in the succeeding letter, as well as, in the *Carmina*, to the long list, with critical remarks, of authors in ix.; to the very interesting, and to this day sound, justification of the introduction of exotic words and neologisms when necessary, in the prose preface to xiv.; and to a crowd of literary references in xxiii.

Cassiodorus.

I have been somewhat copious in dwelling on the bishop-count-poet, because he is infinitely the most valuable document that we have as to the highwater-mark of the state of critical knowledge and opinion with which the Dark or Earlier Middle Ages started.[4] We have in the last

[1] This is a word so delightful in itself that I have no heart to attempt translation. "Carolling," I suppose, would come nearest.

[2] The passage contains many curious details about this not wholly Admirable Crichton, who was at last strangled by his slaves. The description of the dead body and its silent testimony to the crime—*protinus argumento fuere livida cutis, oculi protuberantes, et in obruto vultu non minora iræ vestigia quam doloris*—is vivid, and does not compare too badly even with the great picture of Gloucester's corpse in *Henry VI.*

[3] P. 223.

[4] Indeed, such a passage as the elaborate criticism of the literary work of Lampridius, however exaggerated and

book examined the chief text-book of formal grammar and Rhetoric, that of Martianus, with which they were already provided, and we need only glance at two other standards of theirs, Boethius and Cassiodorus, who come close in time to Sidonius, and probably to Martianus likewise. Cassiodorus wrote, like Capella, on the Liberal arts, though in a manner at once informal and less fantastic, and his influence in encouraging the frequenters of the mediæval *scriptorium* to copy ancient manuscripts deserves eternal gratitude. But I have not yet discovered in him much material for our special inquiry.

Nor is the great name of Boethius here as great as elsewhere. He wrote, indeed, on rhetorical *loci*, and the author of the metres in the *Consolatio*[1] deserves no mean place in creative literature. But if he had taken any really keen critical interest in books, for their form as distinguished from their matter, it must have appeared in the *Consolatio* itself. On the contrary, as everybody knows who has ever looked at the book, it begins with Philosophy packing the Muses off as "strumpets and mermaidens" in a tone half-suggestive of Plato a little the worse for Augustine. And though the "suasion of sweetness rhetorien" is afterwards patronisingly spoken of (Book II., Prose i.), and Homer with the honey-mouth, Lucan, and others are quoted, yet Rhetoric is expressly warned that "she goeth the right way only when she forsaketh not *my* statutes." Moreover, the beautiful metre *Vela Neritii ducis* is a merely moral, and almost merely allegorical, playing on the story of Circe.

Boethius.

We can, however, see from the comparison some useful

out of focus, is of quite priceless value to us. It is the kind of thing of which we have only too little from classical antiquity, and if it were not for the Halicarnassian and Longinus, should have quite wofully little. It is the kind of thing of which we have as nearly as possible nothing from the Middle Ages, and hardly anything, of equal directness to the individual, from the Renaissance; while, though it has been plentiful enough for the last two hundred and fifty years, and especially for the last hundred, the very abundance of it diminishes the individual significance of the expressions.

[1] I use the agreeable Variorum edition, Leyden, 1671. No apology, I think, is needed in this instance for not making my own translations, but partly conveying Chaucer's.

things. The stock of actual erudition possessed by at any rate some persons was considerable; but the number of these persons was not very large, and both the "remnant" itself[1] and its accomplishments were likely to decline and dwindle. The new vernaculars were already assuming importance; men were likely[2] to be chosen for positions of ecclesiastical eminence (almost the only ones in which study of literature was becoming possible), because of their bilingual skill, or to be driven by such positions to study of the vernacular. And this bilingualism was likely not merely to barbarise even their Latin style, but to draw them away from the study of classical Latin, and still more Greek. In regard to the latter, we see further, from two passages of Sidonius quoted above, that persons of very considerable education were apt to use translations of the Greek fathers, as well as of Pagan writings, in preference to the original. Yet again we see that even the most accomplished scholars of the time (and Sidonius himself may certainly claim that distinction) were, on the one hand, more and more acquiescing in what, to borrow Covenanting phraseology, we may call the "benumbing, deadening, and soul-destroying" list of ticket-epithets: and, on the other, were gradually losing a sense of the relative proportions of things—of the literary ratio of patristic to classical literature, and of the productions of their own day to those of the great masters, whether classical or patristic. And thirdly, we see that even so careful a metrical student as the Bishop of Clermont was succumbing to the charm of "recurrent" verses, acrostics, telestics, and all the rest of it.

Critical attitude of the fifth century.

On the other hand, this process of "losing grip" is very far from the state in which we find it by the time that we are in full Middle Age: and, for good as well as for evil, the glorious hotch-potch of that period is still distant. Virgil is not yet an enchanter or anything like it: he and his works are perfectly well placed in their proper literary and historical connections. If, on the side of form, there is perhaps already a rather perilous tendency to see no very great difference between Orosius and

[1] *V. supra*, p. 384, and note.

[2] As in the well-known cases, somewhat later, of St Faron and of Mummolenus.

Livy, there is none to put Dares (who probably did not exist) on a level as an authority with Homer, or above him, in point of matter. And while the fables about Alexander probably *did* exist, men of education did not think of mixing them up with the facts.

The most favourable sign of all, however, is that metrical solicitude which has been already more than once referred to. The anxiety which Sidonius shows to suit his metres to his subject would do credit to a much better poet in a much more "enlightened" age; and it is surely not fantastic to see in his constant reference to success or failure in adjusting "syllables to feet, and feet to measures," that the difference of the classical prosody from the newer, half-accentual quantification even in Latin, and from the vernacular rhythms sounding all over Europe, was forcing itself, consciously or unconsciously, on his mind. And it cannot be repeated too often that to construct and perfect new prosodies, in Latin and in the vernaculars alike, was perhaps the greatest critical-practical problem that the Middle Age had before it.

The sixth— Fulgentius.

The sixth century has even fewer lights among its gathering gloom; in the beginning and at the end of the seventh a kind of rally of torches is made by Isidore and Bede. There are, however, two authors at least in the sixth who are full of significance, even if that significance be too much of a negative kind. These are the African grammarian Fulgentius, with his *Expositio Virgiliana*, probably in the earlier half, and the poet-priest Venantius Fortunatus, certainly in the later.

Fulgentius[1] holds something like a position in the history of Allegory, being not infrequently breveted with the rank of go-between, or the place of fresh starting-point, between the last

[1] Fabius Planciades Fulgentius (to describe whom in appropriate epithet would require the pen and ink of Ritson, though his recent editor says that the *injucundum opus*, as Reifferscheid had called it, had become to him *jucundissimum* in performance) used to be buried in the *Mythographi Latini*. The benevolence of Herr Teubner has however made him accessible separately, or rather with a dim little brace of satellite Fulgentii (ed. Helm, Leipsic, 1898).

development of the purely classical allegory in Claudian, and the thick-coming allegoric fancies of the early Christian homilists and commentators, which were to thicken ever and spread till the full blossoming of Allegory in the *Romance of the Rose*, and its busy decadence thenceforward. Unluckily, Allegory was, as we have seen, no novelty in criticism; but rather a congenital or endemic disease—and Fulgentius only marks a fresh and furious outburst of it. Virgil, a favourite everywhere in the late Roman world, was, it has been said, an especial favourite in Africa: and Fulgentius would appear to have given the reins, not exactly to the steed, but to the ass, of his fancy, in reference to the Mantuan.

The Fulgentii and their books.

The writings of the Fulgentian clan (none of which, fortunately, is long) consist of (1) three books of *Mitologiæ* (*Mythologiæ*), of (2) the *Expositio Virgilianæ Continentiæ secundum Philosophos Morales* which is our principal text, and of (3) a shorter *Expositio Sermonum Antiquorum*, attributed to Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, who was probably of African birth, and probably lived in the early sixth century; of (4) a tractate, *De Ætatibus Mundi et Hominis*, attributed to Fabius Claudius Gordianus Fulgentius; and (5) of a note on the *Thebaid* of Statius, attributed to Fulgentius, Saint and Bishop. The personalities of these persons are to the last degree unknown; and it is very uncertain whether they were in reality one or two or three. The books we may best cite as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

4 is far better written and more sensible than the others; but it has nothing to do with our subject. 3 is a short list (sixteen pages and sixty-two articles) of notes on out-of-the-way words (*abstrusi sermones*), where it is curious to find among really unusual locutions—*friguttire, suggrundaria, tittivilitium*, and the like—such to us everyday ones as *problema* and *auctio*. 2 and 5 concern our business, equally in substance, unequally in importance and extent, and to understand them both, it is desirable to read 1 at least cursorily, although it, like them, is a tissue of appallingly barbarous Latin—enshrining allegorical interpretations as ridiculous as the most absurd in the *Gesta*

Romanorum,[1] and derivations which in their sheer serious insanity surpass the most promising efforts of the clever and sportive schoolboy in the same kind. As no one, I think, who reads this book will regard me as a detractor of the Dark and Middle Ages, I may speak here without fear and without favour.

Having surveyed Mythology from the point of view of the most grovelling allegory, etymologically assisted by such fancies as that Teiresias (Teresias in his spelling) is derived from *theros* and *æon*, meaning "eternal summer," and that Ulixes *Græce* (it will go near to be thought shortly that Fulgentius knew less Greek than Shakespeare) is "quasi-*olon xenos* id est omnium peregrinus," Fulgentius seems to have turned to literature. If he also wrote the note on the *Thebaid* attributed to the Sainted Bishop (and it is very much in the same style), he confined himself to a brief argument of the story, with a few etymologies, such as "*Creon quasi cremens omnia*," and a short preface. In this he tells us that he "can never without grand ammiration[2] retract the inInvestigable prudence of the poets, and the immarcescible vein of their genius": and having thus prepared rejoicing for the heart of the Limousin scholar nine hundred years ahead, he sets the fashion to Lyly by observing "Diligit puer nucem ad ludum integram: sapiens autem et adultus frangit ad gustum." But this, though not insignificant, is a slight thing.

The Super Thebaiden and Expositio Virgiliana.

The *Expositio Virgiliana* or *Virgiliana Continentia* (this word being late Latin for "contents") is itself not long: it fills, with *apparatus criticus*, some five-and-twenty pages. If it were not written in a most detestable style, combining the presence of more than the affectation and barbarism of Martianus with a complete absence of his quaintness and full-blooded savour, it would be rather agreeable to read: even as it is, it is full of interest. We catch Virgil in mid-flight through the void, from that posi-

[1] Some of the morals of the *Gesta* are of course not in the least ridiculous: but others "bear the bell" in that respect.

[2] The forms *ammiratio*, *nimfa*, &c., are interesting as showing Latin in its transformation to Romance.

tion of universal exponent of sober literary art which we have seen him occupy with Macrobius, to his rank as beneficent enchanter a few centuries later. The Bucolics and Georgics are full of such *Phisicæ secreta*, such *misticæ rationes*, that they are actually dangerous to touch. He has passed over the *interna viscera nullius pœne artis* in these books. In the first Eclogue he has physically summed up the three lives (active, contemplative, and enjoying); in the fourth, he is a prophet; in the fifth, a priest; in the sixth, partly a musician, partly a physiologist; in the seventh, *botanicen dinamin tetigit*, he has touched the power of botany;[1] in the eighth he has pointed out magic and the apotelesmatic of the musician; combining this with *euphemesis*,[2] in the ninth.

In the first Georgic he is throughout an astrologer and then a "eufemetic"; in the second, a physiologist and medical man; in the third, wholly an aruspex; and in the fourth, is to the fullest musical. But Fulgentius will not meddle further with the details of these books; and, after a breathless and intricate prologue, attacks the *Æneid* in a manner easily to be conjectured from what has been said. Every word, every syllable almost, of the first line, is tortured to yield an allegory; the account being thrown into the form, first of a dialogue between poet and interpreter, and then of a long speech from the former. Achates is "Græce quasi *aconetos* id est tristitiæ consuetudo." Iopas is "quasi *siopas* id est taciturnitas puerilis." The progress of the story is the growth of human life. The wanderings of the first three books are the tales that amuse youth; the fourth shows how love distracts early manhood; the fifth displays it turning to generous exercises; the sixth is deep study of nature and things; the rest active life. And if anybody wishes to know why Turnus' charioteer was called Metiscus, "Metiscos enim Græce est ebriosus."

[1] It is very agreeable to see how the poor copyist of one MS., utterly nonplussed by the learning of Fulgentius, has excogitated the blessed words "totakicendi namin."

[2] This, disentangled from various *voces nihili* in the MS., is probably used in one of the senses which εὐφημία more properly bears in classical Greek, "liturgical writing," "prayer and praise."

It cannot be necessary to say much of this, which speaks for itself; it is, as we said at first, the *intellectus* (or rather the want of intellect) *sibi permissus* and expatiating unchecked. *Qui l'aime le suive!*

Venantius Fortunatus.

Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus[1] (for a plethora of names was as characteristic of the Latin as of other decadences) is a much more interesting figure, and his critical importance, if less direct, is not really inferior. He goes in the general literary memory with Sidonius, as the twin-light of not yet wholly barbaric Gaul; and he had probably more original poetic gift than his predecessor. At least, I can find nowhere in Sidonius anything approaching the throb and thrill of his two great and universally known hymns, *Pange Lingua* and *Vexilla Regis*—the earliest, perhaps, to attain that ineffable word-music of hymn-Latin, which is entirely independent of mere tune, mere setting, and which is not only equal to, but independent of, the choicest sound-music of either ancient or modern verse. He was also a livelier writer; and though he has made even further progress in the direction of affectation and bombast, these things rather add a piquancy, if not to his painful official praises of Queen Brunehault, at any rate to his expression of his half-pious, half-human affection for Radegund the Queen and Agnes the Abbess, his account of the sad results when the hospitable Mummolenus[2] would make him eat too many peaches, and his admirable description of his sail on the Moselle.

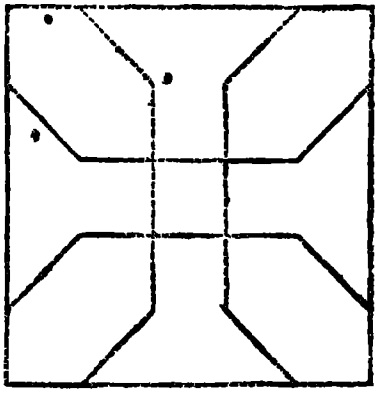
Moreover, he was certainly accomplished in all the learning of his time. He could even write very fair, if not delightful, sapphics. And he is not to be treated with the scornful contempt which some have heaped upon him, merely because he composed (with an amount of labour which makes one's brain and eyes ache to think of) acrostics and cross-poems of various degrees of artificiality. He has one marvellous structure of the latter kind,[3] in which not only do the frame-letters of the

[1] Ed. in two parts — the prose by F. Leo and the verse by B. Krusch— among the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica* (Berlin, 1881-85).

[2] Not the Bishop afterwards famous as first known to preach in French.

[3] Part i. p. 30. Another design of only minor intricacy, but not fully filled in, appears a little later.

scheme make sense, but correspondences, interwoven in the text, trace out, also in sense, a sort of cross *patée*, as thus:—



Here the dots represent (though they are fewer) letters doing double duty, as part of sentences straight across, and in the lines of the figure itself. "The grace and liberty of the composition," as some one says, may indeed be lost in such intricacies, yet are they not in themselves unliterary as a pastime.

It must, however, be most frankly confessed that the literary expressions and references which we find in Fortunatus are (in the sense in which the word has so often to be used in this part of our work) "tell-tales."

The Preface of his Poems,[1] addressed to Pope Gregory, opens with a somewhat emphatic and inflated laudation of the great men of letters of old, who were, we learn, "provident in invention, serious in partition, balanced in distribution, pleasant with the heel of epilogues, fluent with the fount of bile, beautiful with succise terseness, adorned from head to foot [literally "alike crowned and buskined"] with tropes, paradigms, periods, epicheiremes," which gives us a pretty clear idea of what seemed to Fortunatus to be literature. It contains also some touches of the "Italic"[2] writer's contempt of those who "make

[1] Part i. p. 1.

[2] Fortunatus seems to have been carefully styled Presbyter *Italicus*. Cf. "Romanos" below. He was born at, or near, Treviso.

no distinction between the shriek of the goose and the song of the swan," who love "the harp buzzing barbarous *leods*." But far fewer direct references to literature occur in these poems than in those of Sidonius. In II. ix.,[1] to the Parisian clergy who bade him resume his long-abandoned lyre, he takes it up purely as the hymn-writer, not the man of letters. There is more of the attitude of the latter in the prose epistle (III. iv.)[2] to Bishop Felix, but it does not come to very much. In the tenth of the same book,[3] the same bishop (who had, it seems, turned a river from its course) receives a complimentary reference to Homer, but none to Herodotus. Yet another bishop (of the undeniably Frankish name of Bertechramnus) is complimented, in the eighteenth, on his epigrams.[4] But Fortunatus, after much applause, does not fear (let us hope that the Frank was more placable than his brother prelate of Granada later) to add—

> "Sed tamen in vestro quædam sermone notavi
> Carmine de veteri furta novella loqui,
> Ex quibus in paucis superedita syllaba fregit
> Et pede læsa suo musica clauda gemit."

Let us congratulate Venantius on not yielding to the heresy of the "extra-metrical syllable," which has deceived some of the very elect in more illuminated days. Some slight glimmers are given by the flattery,[5] more elaborate than anything yet noticed, of still another bishop, Martin of Gallicia: and in V. iii.[6] we get a ticket-list of the same kind (though shorter and slighter) as those of which Sidonius is so prodigal. In this, after Athanasius has been designated *fortis*, Hilary *clarus*, Martin *dives*, and Ambrose *gravis*, he adds the distich—

> "Gregorius *radiat*, sacer Augustinus *inundat*,
> Basilius *rutilat*, Cæsariusque *micat*."

The epistle to Syagrius of Autun (V. vi.),[7] which introduces another elaborate cross-poem, contains a vindication of it, by a twist of the Horatian tag to the effect that as painting and poetics are so like, why should you not combine them in such

[1] P. 37. [2] P. 52. [3] P. 62. [4] P. 72.
[5] In the prose overture of Bk. V., p. 101 *sq.* [6] Ll. 37-40 (p. 107). [7] P. 112.

a fashion? After which the intricacies of the poem itself are carefully explained. The reference to "us Romans" in the poem to Sigebert (V. ii. 98)[1] (where he compliments the king on his skill, Sicambrian as he is, in the Latin tongue) suggests that the writer would have been scantly grateful for the inclusion of his work among "Monumenta *Germaniæ*."

The genuine prose works of Fortunatus, consisting only of a few Saints' Lives, do not promise much; but there is at least one remarkable passage in them. It is the opening of the Life of Saint Marcellus[2] in which his customary deprecation takes this form. "Illustrious orators of the most eloquent genius, whose speeches are distinguished by varied flowers, and shadowed by the vernal tendrils of eloquence, are wont deliberately to seek common causes and sterile matter, that they may show themselves as possessing an inexhaustible flow of speech on the smallest subjects, and as able to inundate the dryest themes with their internal founts of rhetoric. Men not so clever cannot even treat great subjects," &c.

And this, falling in with the other glimpses we have obtained, gives no misty view of the critical standpoint of this agreeable writer. The literary *nisus*, the literary tone, are fairly well maintained; there is no glaring lack of positive knowledge; and neither style nor sense shows anything like the degradation of Fulgentius. But Fortunatus, far more than Sidonius, is, in the good old phrase, "to seek" in the general field of matters literary, and especially in its critical quarters. Glitter and clatter, tinsel and crackers, are in prose, if not in verse (he is far more sober there), too much his ideals. The curse of the ancient formal Rhetoric has so far outlasted its blessings, that the expression of opinion last quoted would suit, and almost exaggerate, the position of the worst of the old declamation-makers. As to prosody, he has to some extent, if not wholly, "kept the bird in his bosom," and his affection for subtleties in arrangement is, as has been said, not so wholly to his discredit as Mr Addison and Mr Pope thought. But it is rather a dangerous support; and he has very few others.

[1] P. 133. [2] Part ii. p. 49.

As Fulgentius and Venantius have stood for the sixth, so Isidore and Bede[1] may stand for the seventh century, while Bede's flourishing time stretches into the eighth.

Isidore of Seville again.

Isidore's treatment of Grammar[2] is much fuller than his handling of her showier sister Rhetoric.[3] It fills the whole of the First Book of the curious Encyclopædia called the *Origines*, and is much more liberally arranged than the usual grammatical treatise, including a great deal of applied matter of various kinds, visibly filching Tropes and Figures from Rhetoric herself, and, besides dealing with Prosody, even devoting sections to the Fable and to History under more than one head. There is much interesting (if not for us strictly relevant) matter in the earlier chapters, where we read that *literæ* are *quasi legiterœ*, and that Greek and Latin appear to have arisen out of Hebrew. The *vitia*, from barbarism and solœcism downwards, are pure Rhetoric, containing, as they do, things like *tapeinosis* and amphibology, with which Grammar, as such, has certainly nothing to do; and they are near the rhetorical side of Criticism herself. The Metaplasms which follow, as purely verbal, may be claimed by the elder sister, but the *schemata* and the *tropi* are unquestioned usurpations. And thereafter, with Chapter Thirty-Seven *De Prosa*, we are almost on our own ground.

Isidore, if not (save in his title) very original, is judicious in his selections from the public stock, and puts them together in a much more useful fashion than some authors of "composition-books" a good deal his juniors. Prose is "a straightforward form of speech freed from metre." Metres (he has given "feet" a good deal earlier) are the fixed arrangements of feet which constitute verse. Their names are classified and accounted for, as are, subsequently, the chief forms of poetry in which they appear. The origination of these is claimed for various sacred

[1] Aldhelm, between the two, wrote on metre, and is a considerable and characteristic writer for his time, but needs no detailed treatment here.

[2] The *Origines* or *Etymologiæ*, as a whole, form vol. iii. of Lindemann's *Corpus Grammaticorum* (Leipsic, 1833), but this can usually be obtained separate, and is worth having. It, of course, repeats the *Rhetoric*, which is merely one section of it.

[3] See above, p. 374 *sq.*

persons—of the Hymn for David, "who was long before Ennius," of the Epithalamium for Solomon. Not a few of the definitions, though desultory and oddly selected, are noteworthy, and the considerable space given to that of the Cento is characteristic of the age.

Fable, as has been said, has a section to itself, an honour which is prophetic of—and considering Isidore's influence may, to some extent, have caused—the great attention paid in the Middle Ages to that kind. The History sections, though four in number, are much shorter—indeed, scarcely so long together as the single one allotted to Fable, which fact also is true, as the needle is, to the pole of the time. It is much better, Isidore thinks, that a man should only write of what he has actually seen. But History is not useless reading. Strictly, it is of our own time; "Annals" of the past; while Ephemeris is a diurnal and Kalendarium a monthly history. Finally the book ends with a contrast of *historia*, *argumentum*, and *fabula*. The first is of true things really done; the second of things which, though they have not been done, might be; the third of things which neither have been done nor can be, because they are contrary to nature. Here *argumentum* clearly looks towards oratory: with regard to the difference between *historia* and *fabula*, it must be admitted that the ages which followed very scrupulously forgot their teacher's warning.

But even this does not exhaust our indebtedness to a very agreeable work, full of good sense and sound learning. The Sixth Book, which begins with an account of the Old and New Testament, diverges to the consideration of books generally. A note on famous libraries leads Isidore to record the chief authorities on Biblical Exegesis, from whom he passes to Latin libraries, to others (those of the Martyr Pamphilus and of Jerome), and thence to authors. Much-writing attracts him first: and Varro, the Greek Chalcenterus, Origen, and St Augustine are picked out, the not entirely single-edged compliment being paid to the last, that not only could nobody write his books by working day and night, but nobody could read them completely by a similar expenditure of time and labour. An odd division of works follows, into *excerpta* or *scholia*,

"homilies," and "tomes" or books, or volumes:[1] and this is followed by a string of remarks, as before rather desultory, on different kinds of books and writings, commentaries, prefaces, and what not. Then Isidore passes to the material side, and discusses waxen and wooden tablets, parchment, paper, with something about *format*. The staff and the plant of libraries follow; and then, returning from things profane to things divine, the book finishes with an account of the Calendar and the Offices of the Church.

Those to whose taste and intellect this kind of thing appears despicable must, of course, be permitted to despise it. Others will prefer to recognise, with interest and sympathy, the combination of an extremely strong desire for knowledge, and the possession of no small quantity thereof, not merely with great disadvantages of resource and supply, but with a most curious and (if it were not so healthy and so promising) pathetic inability to distinguish, to know exactly where to plant the grip, what to discard, what simply to neglect. And they, once more, will see in this whole attitude, in this childhood crying for the light, something more encouraging than the complacent illumination of certain other ages, with which, perhaps, they may be more fully acquainted.

Bede again.

Bede,[2] a century later than Isidore, presents a changed but not a lesser interest. It is utterly improbable that the Bishop of Seville found himself in face of any vernacular writing that could be called in the least literary—if any vernacular except Latin and Old Basque can be supposed to have existed in Spain at all. Bede's circumstances were quite different. The most famous passage in his writings—the story of Cædmon—is sufficient to tell us, even if we did not know it from other testimony, and from his extant death-bed verses, that he was well acquainted with vernacular poetry.

But he seems to have thought it either unnecessary or un-

[1] Perhaps this is not so odd as it looks. *Excerpta* or *scholia* are, *individually*, scraps; "homilies," or essays, are only parts of a book: *tomi* are books substantive.

[2] Bede's treatises on Metric and Orthography, besides being accessible in the various collected editions of his works, are to be found in vol. vii. part ii. of Keil's *Grammatici Latini* (Leipsic, 1878).

desirable to give any critical attention to it. His *Ars Metrica*,[1] like his *Orthography*[2] and his *Rhetoric*,[3] concerns itself strictly with Latin. That this was on the whole better for the time, and so indirectly for us, who are the offspring of that time; that it was better for the vernaculars to be left to grow and seed themselves, and be transformed naturally without any attempt to train and so to cramp them; that it was, on the other hand, all important that the hand of discipline should be kept on the only "regular" writing, that of Latin—we may not only admit with frankness, but most eagerly and spontaneously advance and maintain. But the carnal man cannot help sighing for a tractate—a tractatule even of the tiniest—on English verse, from the Venerable One. There are, however, in the *Ars Metrica* one large and several small crumbs of comfort. It is a pity that the learned and accurate Keil should have spoken so scornfully[4] of the undoubted truth that, while Bede supplements the precepts of the old grammarians in no whit, his whole usefulness lies in regard to the examination of more recent poets, and, as he calls them, "modern versifiers"; and should, a little further, have still more scornfully declined[5] to trouble himself with verifying unnamed references to such persons as Prudentius, Sedulius, Venantius Fortunatus, and others. To despise any age of literature is not literary: and to ignore it (as the motto which I have ventured to borrow from the excellent Leyser hath it in other words) is not safe. I think we may ask Herr Keil this question, "Is it not exactly of the *moderni versificatores* that Bede can speak to us with advantage?" Do we, except by a supererogation of curiosity, want remarks from him on Virgil and Ovid?

His Ars Metrica.

Bede (who addresses the tract to the same Cuthbert whom we have to thank for the charming account of his death) begins with the letter, goes on to the syllable, and then has a chapter of peculiar interest on *common* syllables — those stumbling-

[1] Ed. cit. (with Introd.), pp. 219-260.

[2] Ibid., pp. 261-294.

[3] See p. 874.

[4] Ed. cit., p. 221.

[5] *Ut longum et molestum erat, ita in hoc genere scriptorum parum utile esse videbatur.*

blocks to so many modern students of English prosody. The quantity of syllables in various positions is then dealt with successively, and next the metres, cæsura, elision, &c. One may note as specially interesting the section *Quæ sit optima Carminis forma* (p. 243), both as showing long before, in reference to the hexameter, the same "striving after the best" which appears in Dante's extrication of the *canzone* and the hendecasyllable from meaner forms and lines, and as indicating something like a sense of that "verse-paragraph" which was to be the method of Shakespeare and of Milton. In dealing with these things he sometimes quotes, and still more frequently relies upon, Mallius Theodorus. But the passage which, if it existed alone, would make the book valuable (though in that case, as no doubt in many others, we should be prone to think that we had lost something more precious than it actually is), comes under the head *De Rhythmo*. After saying that the "Common books of a hundred metres"[1] will give many of these which he has omitted, he goes on thus: "But rhythm seems to be like metres, in that it is a modulated arrangement of words, governed not by metrical rule, but *by the number of syllables*, according to the judgment of the ear. And there can be rhythm without metre, though there can be no metre without rhythm: or, as it may be more clearly defined, metre is rhythm with modulation, rhythm modulation without proportion. But for the most part you will find, by a certain chance, proportion likewise in rhythm: not that any artificial discipline is used, but from the conduct of the sound and the modulation itself; and such as the poets of the people[2] naturally produce in a rustic, learned poets in a learned manner." And then he quotes, as examples of iambic and trochaic rhythms respectively, the well-known hymns, *Rex æterne Domine* and *Apparebit repentina*.

Now this, which, though partly a result of, is quite different from, the classical opposition of rhythm and metre, is a thing

[1] *Libris centimetrorum simplicibus examinata.* "Centimeter" is "the poet who employs a hundred metres," or the critic who discusses them. Sidonius (Carm. ix. 264), in a passage referred to above (p. 389), applies it to Terentianus Maurus, who certainly deserves it both in theory and practice (*v.* his book, ed. Lachmann, Berlin, 1836).

[2] *Vulgares poeta.*

of the first importance, and could not have been said by any one who had neglected the *moderni versificatores:* while it would perhaps not have been said so clearly and well by any one who had not known, and paid some attention to, the rising vernaculars. Even if, as Keil thinks, Bede followed such writers as Victorinus and Audax, he confirmed and strengthened this following by his study of recent verse.

I do not perceive any great crux in this passage: but Guest[1] was puzzled by the phrase *numero syllabarum*, which he seems to have taken as meaning that rhythm was more, not less, strict than metre in syllabic regularity. I am not sure that the words bear this interpretation: but, even if they did, we must remember that the rhythms *of which Bede was speaking* are very strict syllabically, and admit little or no equivalence. The more prudish hymn-writers even dislike elision, and give every syllable its value.

The Central Middle Ages to be more rapidly passed over.

It is not from caprice or idleness that the somewhat minute examination thus given to the opening centuries of the Dark or early Middle Ages will now be exchanged for a more rapid flight over the central portion of the same division of history. There are two very good reasons for this course. The first is, that there is a very great absence, probably of all material, certainly of material that is accessible. The second is, that even if such material existed and could be got at, it would probably be of little if of any service. When conditions of rhythmical composition in Latin were once settled, that composition was pursued with delightful results,[2] but with half traditional, half instinctive, absence of critical inquiry as to form. It was impossible that any such inquiry should take place, in the case of the vernaculars, until they had reached a state of actual crea-

[1] *History of English Rhythms*, Bk. iii. chap. vi. (p. 472, ed. Skeat). He also speaks of "discrepancies" in the different copies: but Keil's *apparatus* gives no important variants in the MSS.

[2] For the understanding reader there is perhaps no subdivision of literature more constantly delectable and refreshing than the Latin hymns of the sixth-thirteenth centuries on the one hand, and on the other the lighter work contained in such collections as the *Carmina Burana*, Edélestand du Méril's *three* issues of *Poésies Populaires Latines*, Wright's *Poems of Walter Mapes*, &c.

tive development, which none of them enjoyed till the twelfth century, and hardly any of them till the thirteenth. As for appreciation, other than traditional, of authors classical, patristic, or contemporary, this was rendered a rare thing by that very mental constitution of the Middle Ages which has already been often referred to, and which will be more fully discussed in the Interchapter following this book. This constitution, rich in many priceless qualities, almost entirely lacked self-detachment on the one hand, and egotistic introspection on the other. It can very seldom have occurred to any Mediæval to isolate himself from the usual estimate of writers—to separate his opinion of their formal excellence from the interest, or the use, of their contents. And even if it had so occurred to any one, he would probably not have thought that opinion worth communicating. From which things, much more than from the assumed shallowness or puerility, a thousand years saw an almost astoundingly small change in regard to the matters with which we deal. Boethius and Martianus are text-books to the early sixteenth century as to the early sixth: the satirical lampoons of the religious wars in France burlesque the form, and use the language, of the hymns of Venantius Fortunatus:[1] Hawes and Douglas look at literature and science with the eyes of Isidore, if not even of Cassiodorus. Whether this conservatism did not invite, disastrously, the reaction of the Renaissance-criticism, we shall have to consider later; it is certain that it limits, very notably, the material of the present book, and especially of this portion of the present chapter On two very remarkable books of the earliest thirteenth century, the *Labyrinthus* attributed to Eberhard, and the *Nova Poetria* of Geoffrey de Vinsauf, we may dwell with the utmost advantage. Otherwise a few notes, chiefly on the formal *Arts Poetic* of the mid-Middle Age, are not only all that need, but almost all that can, be given before we turn to the great mediæval document of our subject, the *De Vulgari Eloquio* of Dante.

[1] Cf. the ferocious, but vigorous, lampoon on Catherine of Montpensier and Jacques Clément, entitled *Prosa Cleri Parisiensis ad ducem de Mena* (*Anciennes Poésies Françaises*, vol. ii. *Bibl. Elzévirienne*: Paris, 1855).

In the vernacular languages it is hardly necessary to do more than refer to the instructions for accomplishing the intricacies of Provençal verse found in that tongue;[1] the Latin rhythmics are rather more interesting. Until quite recently, access to them, save in the case of those students who unite palæographical accomplishment with leisure and means to travel all over Europe, was almost confined to two precious collections, the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* of Wright and Halliwell, and the plump and pleasing volume of Polycarp Leyser, which, among its varied treasures, gives the entire *Labyrinthus* of Eberhard, the most important of them all. Now, however, the really admirable industry of Signor Giovanni Mari has collected, not merely the metrical part of the *Labyrinthus*, and the work (also rather famous) of John de Garlandia, but no less than six others, all of the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.[2] It is indeed not impossible that the first of these, the *De Rhythmico Dictamine*, may in its original have been as old as the twelfth, to which the *Labyrinthus* itself used also to be assigned.

Provençal and Latin treatises.

The *Dictamen*,[3] the MSS. of which are found all over Europe, is very short. It lays down firmly the principle, which was later to differentiate Romance from Teutonic, especially English, prosody, that *rhythmus est consonans paritas syllabarum sub certo numere comprehensarum;* it sets the limits of the line at a minimum of four syllables and a maximum of fourteen; it designs rhyme throughout as *consonance;* it gives examples from well-known hymns, from the poems attributed to Mapes and some not elsewhere known; and it supplies minute distinctions of kind as "transformed," "equicomous," "orbiculate," "serpentine" rhythms. The tractatule is strictly limited to rhythm proper: classical metres do not appear in it. A rehandling by a certain "Master Sion"

The De Dictamine Rhythmico.

[1] *V.* Bartsch, *Grundriss zur Gesch. der Prov. Lit.*, p. 65 *sq.*, on Faidit's *Donat*, Ramon Vidal's *Rasos de Trobar*, &c.

[2] *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, by T. Wright & J. O. Halliwell, 2 vols., London, 1845. P. Leyser, *Historia Poetarum et Poematum Medii Ævi*, Halle, 1721. G. Mari, *I Trattate Medievali di Ritmica Latina*, Milan, 1899.

[3] First given in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, i. 30-32. The others (except the *Labyrinthus*) are in Mari only.

differs in its examples, and is rather more minute in its subdivisions: and there is yet a third version or pair of versions showing the authority and general influence of the treatise, while the *Regulæ de Rhythmis* hardly differ essentially, and lead to the same conclusion.

John of Garlandia.

The *Ars Rhythmica* of John de Garlandia is a much more elaborate composition, which originally followed upon similar treatments of "prose" and "metre." It is remarkable on the one hand for giving, not mere verses, but whole poems as examples, and on the other for varying the same theme in different rhythmical dispositions. The terms of ancient metric are also borrowed rather more freely than in the *Dictamen;* and great attention is paid to "rhetorical colours" of verse—homœoteleuton and the like. It is much longer than any form of the *Dictamen*, and has a supplement dealing with the strictly metrical forms usual in hymns. This does not exhibit the learned John Garland (he may have been an Englishman) as an expert in literary history, since he writes: "Saphicum, a Sapho *muliere quadam* quæ fuit inventrix hujus metri: adonicum ab Adone inventore." But in his liberal contribution of probably original examples he includes an *Oda de Archidiacono*, which might have been useful in a famous investigation. In fact, probably a major part of the treatise consists of not very excellent verse.

The Labyrinthus.

Signor Mari, conformably to his plan, has given of the *Labyrinthus*[1] only the short section dealing actually with rhythm: but the whole poem is of very great interest and importance for us—indeed of more than any work known to me between Isidore and Dante. The work, which is otherwise called *De Miseriis Rectorum Scholarum*, is an elaborate treatise on pædagogics. In the progress and details of this, the writer seems to forget the lugubrious estimate of his profession with which he starts, and which goes so far as to lay down that the future schoolmaster is cursed in his mother's

[1] Or *Laborintus*. The adoption of an "Eberhard of Bethune" as the author is not universally granted, nor the dating at 1212. But the exact authorship is not of the slightest importance to us, and the exact date not of much. The whole poem is printed by Leyser, p. 795 *sq.*

womb. Very sound rules are however given for guiding the moral nature and conduct of this unfortunate functionary; and then his various businesses are systematically attacked in elegiacs, not at all contemptible with due allowance. The second part deals with "themes," grammar, and, to some extent, composition in general, though the examples, like the lecture, are in verse; the third with versification. And here we get a really precious estimate of various authors, ostensibly for their educational value, but, as in Quintilian's case, going a good deal further. Indeed, hardly since Quintilian's own time have we had such a critical summary. Cato, a special darling of the Middle Age, is "a path of virtue and a rule of Morals,"

Critical review of poets contained in it.

"though the brevity of his metre forbids him to polish his words." Theodolus,[1] a tenth-century writer of *Eclogæ*, who "champions" (is this the sense of *arcet?*) the cause of truth against falsehood, "and in whose verse theology plays," comes next; and then the far better known Avianus, the instructive and moral virtue of whose fables is acknowledged, though he is debited *pauperiore stylo*. In one of the puns so dear to the sensible Middle Ages, *Æsopus metrum non sopit—i.e.*, writes no dull or sleepy verse—and is otherwise highly praised. Maximianus[2] and Pamphilus (the original of the *Celestina*) follow, and "Geta,"[3] and a punning reference[4] to Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine*. Statius, of course, is praised, indeed twice over. The "pleasing" work of Ovid, the "satire of the Venusian" the "not juvenile but mature" ditto of Juvenal, which "lays bare and never cloaks vice"; Persius of the lofty soul, who spares no subtlety of

[1] Or Theodulus: *v.* Leyser, *op. cit.*, p. 825 *sq.*

[2] This barbarous, and to Mrs Grundy shocking, but by no means uninteresting versifier, was a great favourite with the Middle Ages. He may be found conveniently in Baehrens, *Poetæ Latini Minores*, v. 313 *sq.*

[3] Leyser oddly annotated *Geta gemens* "titulus tragediæ," but the words—

"Quia captus Mercuriali
Arte Jovem lectus Amphitrionis habet"—

can only refer to an *Amphitryon*.

[4] "Thesiphones raptum qui comptus carmine claudit
Arte nec ingenio claudicat ille suo."

To abduct Tisiphone would be a feather in the cap of any Don Juan, for audacity if not for taste; but the text is corrupt enough to make it (as it is elsewhere) an easy *f.l.* for Persephone. The puns in *claudit* and *claudicat* moreover are practically decisive.

mind though he is a lover of brevity, come next, while to these great satirists of old, the *Architrenius*[1] of John of Hauteville is yoked, with less injustice than may seem likely to devotees of classic and scorners of mediæval literature. The inevitable eccentricity (to *us*) of the mediæval estimate, and probably also the perseverance of the wooden censorship of Servius, is shown by the fact that only Virgil's "themes," not his treatment, are noticed, except obliquely. The second notice of Statius for the *Thebaid*, as the first had been for the *Achilleid*, is less reticent, praising him as *eloquii jucundus melle*; and Lucan is said to sing *metro lucidiore*, while an *Alexandreid* (no doubt that of Gautier of Châtillon), though described as "shining by Lucan's light," is extolled as a historical poem. Claudian, again by allusion, receives praise for his praise of Stilicho, and Dares (as we expect with resignation) for his "veracity"; indeed the clerestories toward that south-north are quite as lustrous as ebony. Still Homer is placed beside him without depreciation, unless the mention of *Argolicum dolum* is intended as a stigma. The couplet following—

> "Sidonii regis qui pingit prælia morem
> Egregium calamus Sidonianus habet"—

is annotated by Leyser "Apollonius," but there seems some difficulty in this Apollonius. *Rhodius* has nothing to do with Tyre or Sidon; and Apollonius *of Tyre* has very little to do with *prælia*. The poet alluded to, whoever he is, possesses a pen with a noble manner. A Salimarius or Solinarius, who sang of the crusades, may be any versifier of William of Tyre: unless, indeed, the phrase *plenus amore crucis* refers to one of the numerous poems on the Invention of the Cross. Macer's matter is praised, but not his verse, *non sapit ille metro*—a true Quintilianian judgment. Petrus Riga (*petra cujus rigat Cristus*)

[1] This remarkable twelfth-century poem—*v. infra*, note, p. 414, an allegorical world-pilgrimage with special reference to student sojourn at Paris—was first abstracted by Wright in his *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, vol. ii., London, 1846, and afterwards published in full by him (*Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century*, London, 1872). John of Hauteville or Anville is also credited with a MS. treatise, *De Epistolarum Compositione*. I wish I had seen it.

escapes better. Sedulius is noted for "sedulity" of metre, and Arator "ploughs" the apostolic facts well, while Prudentius, of course, is prudent.

Alanus (de Insulis: "Alanus who was very sage," as Pierre de la Sippade, the translator of *Paris and Vienne* from Provençal into French says) is cited for his dealing with the Seven Arts in the *Anti-Claudianus;* and half-a-dozen lines of rather obscure allusiveness are devoted to Matthias Vindocinensis on Tobit, Geoffrey of Vinsauf (*v. infra*), and Alexander of Villedieu. Prosper *doctrinæ prosperitate sapit;* and the list is closed by fresh praises of the above Matthias or Matthew, of Martianus Capella and his "happy style," of Boethius, Bernardus, the *Physiologus*, Paraclitus (?), and Sidonius Apollinaris.[1]

This catalogue, partly reasoned, is precious, as showing what the "Thirty best books" of the age of Dante's birth were. It is succeeded by metrical and rhythmical directions, characterised by a good deal of punning as above, but also by acuteness and knowledge.

The extract from the *Labyrinthus* given by Signor Mari is followed in his book by two other rhythmical tractates of small importance, one very short, from a MS. in the Monaco library, and a longer one, but much later (it is probably as late as 1400), by a certain Nicolo Tibino. This last is chiefly noteworthy as giving fewer examples, but much exposition and discussion: it is indeed, after the custom of these ancestors, a kind of commentary on the *Labyrinthus.*

Minor rhythmical tractates.

But, as it happens, the next piece to the *Labyrinthus* in Leyser is a treatise of interest as great as its own, if not greater, the *Poetria Nova* of Geoffrey de Vinsauf. Geoffrey,

[1] *Physiologus* is of course the famous piece of Thetbaldus, the original — mediate or immediate — of all the vernacular *Bestiaries.* "Paraclitus" Leyser prints in capitals, like the other titles of books or authors :—

"Hortatur propria per scripta PARACLITUS omnes
Peccantes. Veniam gratia donat iis."

I should myself have taken this for a reference to the Holy Spirit as speaking through the moralities of the *Physiologus.* The false quantity is, of course, no objection to this: the 3rd syllable is short at pleasure from Prudentius onwards. For poems of Matthias Vindocinensis see *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, ii. 257 *sq.* There is some merit in them.

Geoffrey de Vinsauf: his Nova Poetria.

who, despite his French-sounding name, was certainly a countryman of ours, has been rather unkindly treated by us. Chaucer bestowed upon him one of his most ingeniously humorous gibes,[1] and Mr Wright (the most faithful and enthusiastic guardian and restorer of our Latin poets, and usually as tolerant as any, this side of mere critical omnivorousness) uses hard language of him in the *Biographia Britannica Literaria*.[2] But he is too valuable to us to be here abused: rather shall we be grateful to him exceedingly for revealing the literary tastes and ideals of the age as they lived. The *New Poetic*[3] begins by one of those mediæval gambades which, themselves sometimes partaking of the not unamiably nonsensical, seem at the present day to have a special gift of maddening those persons whose imbecility is of a different complexion from theirs. Geoffrey dedicates his poem to Pope Innocent III. ("stupor mundi"), and is at once in a difficulty. It would not do to call the Pope *Nocens; Innocens* is simply impossible in a hexameter. So he plays about the subject for a score or so of lines, adding eulogistic jocular remarks on other Christian names, especially in relation to the Papacy. "Augustine may hold his tongue: Leo be quiet: John leave off: Gregory halt,"[4] while Innocent is comparable with Bartlemy in nobility, with Andrew in mildness, with St John himself in precious youth, in faith with Peter, in consummate scholarship with Paul. Then Rome is praised in comparison with England, and the poet-professor-of-poetry plunges into his subject.

His value, even if it were more flawed and alloyed than it is, will appear at once from the simple statement of the fact that, unlike the great majority of mediæval writers (such as they are) on literature, he does not confine himself to form on the one hand, and on the other does not adopt, in handling his subject, the extreme cut-and-dried rhetorical restrictions, though his own conception of the matter is more or less regulated by them. I do not remember that he ever quotes Horace; but it is pretty

[1] *Nun's Priest's Tale*, 527 *sq.*

[2] *Anglo-Norman Period*, vol. ii. p. 398 *sq.*

[3] Leyser, *op. cit.*, pp. 855-986.

[4] "Augustine tace. Leo papa quiesce. Johannes
Desine. Gregori subsiste."

certain that he had the *Ars Poetica* before him. He opens with the most solemn and elaborate commands to the poet not to rush upon his subject, to leave nothing to chance, but to form the conception of the work carefully and completely beforehand. "A little gall embitters a whole mass of honey, and one spot makes a whole face ugly." In his second chapter he becomes more closely rhetorical. The poet must first choose and arrange his subject; then elaborate and amplify it; then clothe it in "civil, not rustic" words; and lastly, study its proper recitation or delivery. Under the first head the *mot d'ordre* is order: the very word *ordo* occurs over and over again in the first dozen or sixteen lines. The exordium must look straight to the end: and all the other parts must follow according to the regular drill of a "theme." Special attention is given to the employment of Examples and Proverbs. Under the head of treatment, Brevity, Amplification, and all the scholastic tricks of style are inculcated again with plentiful examples, these including that unlucky passage against Friday which tempted the wicked wit of another Geoffrey. It is, however, fair to say that He of the Sound Wine does not himself seem to have been by any means destitute of a certain sense of humour, and demands ridicule of the ridiculous. If by his precept, and still more by his examples, Geoffrey seems too much to encourage word-play as a lighter, and bombast as a graver, ornament of composition, it is well to remember that the fashions of every time are not only liable to exaggeration, but nearly always exhibit it. Professional students of literature have no difficulty in putting a name to such exaggerations in the thirteenth, the sixteenth, or the eighteenth century; nor will such students in the future have any more in performing the same office for the literary fashions of the late nineteenth. Nor are some of the prescriptions for figure, and fanciful colour and conceit, by any means infelicitous—always supposing that such things can be made the subject of regular prescription at all. On the other hand, it must be admitted that Geoffrey is sometimes painfully rudimentary. The budding poet who requires to be told that

> "Aptantur bene dentes nix; labra flammæ;
> Gustus mel; vultus rosa; frons lac; crines et aurum;"

and who then obediently "goes and does it," is a person with whose works reviewers (for their sins) are indeed still well acquainted, but to whom no philanthropist would willingly give encouragement.

This descent to even the lowest ranges of the particular is, however, one of the most interesting points of the book. There are some two thousand lines in all, and the whole, except the dedication and three not very long epilogue-addresses to Pope, Emperor, and a certain Archbishop William (who has not, I think, been identified), is strictly devoted to business.

This poem is, on fair authority, assigned to the year 1216, the *Labyrinthus* being dated some four years earlier. And, without pinning our faith to these dates and so running the danger of its unsettlement should they be attacked, we may say quite boldly that the *Labyrinthus* and the *Nova Poetria*[1] together give us a remarkable and nearly complete conspectus of what the late twelfth and early thirteenth century thought about

[1] Three other poems of the twelfth or early thirteenth century (referred to above) are more original, two of them at least are more amusing, and all have obtained more notice from general literary historians. These are the *Speculum Stultorum* or *Brunellus* of Nigel Wireker, the *Architrenius* (see p. 410) of John of Hauteville, and the *Anti Claudianus* of Alanus de Insulis. All three may be found most conveniently in Wright's above cited work, *Anglo Latin Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century* (2 vols., Rolls Series, London, 1872). They are by no means to be neglected by us, though their testimony is mostly negative, and a slight reference to its nature will cover, indirectly, the absence of reference in the text to such still more generally famous authors as John of Salisbury and Walter Mapes himself. It is probable that all five writers, as well as Godfrey of Winchester (also in Wright, *op. cit.*), who could write fair epigrams in the more decent style of Martial, and others, were well acquainted with no inconsiderable part of the classics. Upon satirists, moreover, like Wirel or and John of Hauteville, who were attacking the vanity of monkish and clerical life, hopes and ambitions, the labour in vain of Universities, and the like, some such indirect but substantive literary criticism as we find in their Roman originals would seem almost imperative. But there is nothing of the kind, either in the *Speculum* or in the *Architrenius*. In the much duller *Anti Claudianus*, Rhetoric, like the other arts, appears, and she is employed, consistently with her presentation in Martianus (though the Rhetoric of Capella would perhaps have been too proud to do this directly) to "paint and gild the pole" of the allegorical Chariot of Prudence. But of criticism there is nothing, or so little as to be nothing. Nor will much be found in the interesting notice of mediæval notices of books and book collections which occurs in M. Cocheris' ed. of the *Philobiblon* (*v. infra*, p. 455), pp. xxxiv-xlvii.

literature, in what was still its almost all-embracing form — poetry, in both its rhythmical and metrical shapes—and in the only thoroughly acknowledged literary language of the time. For although the vernaculars were already knocking at the door, they were doing so as yet timidly and half consciously, while in so far as they were deliberately practised, the principles of composition and of taste which guided the practice cannot have been different. We find, if not always with exactly the same *nuance*, terms of Dante's critical vocabulary (*e.g.*, "pexa") in the *Poetria Nova*. And though neither Eberhard nor Geoffrey would in all probability have had anything but scorn for the suggestion that "vulgar" could possibly equal "regular" composition; though they were at best men of respectable talent; their general critical estimate was probably not very different from that of their great successor on the bridge of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of his eagle glance into the future of literature they were entirely destitute, but he shared at least some of their confused vision in reference to the past.[1]

[1] If to this peculiarity I seem to refer too often, let me close this chapter with a sentence from one who loved the Middle Ages as well as any man, and knew them far better than almost any. To them, says M. Paulin Paris, "Les siècles passés ne semblaient former qu'une seule et grande époque, où se réunissaient toutes les célébrités de l'histoire."—*Les Romans de la Table Ronde*, i. 169 (Paris: 1868-77).

CHAPTER II.

DANTE.

THE 'DE VULGARI ELOQUIO': ITS HISTORY AND AUTHENTICATION—ITS IMPORTANCE, AND THE SCANTY RECOGNITION THEREOF—ABSTRACT OF ITS CONTENTS: THE "VULGAR TONGUE" AND "GRAMMAR"—THE NATURE, ETC., OF THE GIFT OF SPEECH—DIVISION OF CONTEMPORARY TONGUES, AND OF THE SUBDIVISIONS OF ROMANCE—THE 'ITALIAN DIALECTS': SOME REJECTED AT ONCE—OTHERS: SICILIAN, APULIAN, TUSCAN, AND GENOESE—VENETIAN: SOME GOOD IN BOLOGNESE—THE "ILLUSTRIOUS" LANGUAGE NONE OF THESE, BUT THEIR COMMON MEASURE—ITS FOUR CHARACTERISTICS—THE SECOND BOOK: WHY DANTE DEALS WITH POETRY ONLY—ALL GOOD POETRY SHOULD BE IN THE "ILLUSTRIOUS"—THE SUBJECTS OF HIGH POETRY: WAR, LOVE, VIRTUE—ITS FORM: CANZONI—DEFINITION OF POETRY—ITS STYLES, AND THE CONSTITUENTS OF THE GRAND STYLE—"SUPERBIA CARMINUM"—"CONSTRUCTIONIS ELATIO"—"EXCELLENTIA VERBORUM"—"PEXA ET HIRSUTA"—THE CANZONE—IMPORTANCE OF THIS BOOK—INDEPENDENCE AND NOVELTY OF ITS METHOD—DANTE'S ATTENTION TO FORM—HIS DISREGARD OF ORATORY—THE INFLUENCE ON HIM OF ROMANCE, AND OF COMPARATIVE CRITICISM—THE POETICAL DIFFERENTIA ACCORDING TO HIM—HIS ANTIDOTE TO THE WORDSWORTHIAN HERESY—HIS HANDLING OF METRE—OF DICTION—HIS STANDARDS OF STYLE—THE "CHAPTER OF THE SIEVE"—THE "PEXA"—THE "HIRSUTA"—OTHER CRITICAL "LOCI" IN DANTE: THE EPISTLE TO CAN GRANDE—THE "CONVITO"—DANTE ON TRANSLATION—ON LANGUAGE AS SHOWN IN PROSE AND VERSE—FINAL REMARKS ON HIS CRITICISM.

MANY are the fortunes of books and the curiosities of them: but there are few which exceed, in curiosity of many kinds, the history, character, and fate of the treatise variously entitled *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and *De Vulgari Eloquio*, and attributed generally, if not universally, to Dante Alighieri.[1] Its mere

[1] The choice between *Eloquentia* and *Eloquium* lies with the taste and fancy of the chooser. The first word occurs first in the treatise itself. The

history is unusual. In the fifth chapter of the first book of the *Convito*, Dante says that he shall speak elsewhere more fully, on the subject of Latin and the Vernacular, in a book which, D.V., he intends to write on *Volgare Eloquenza*. Boccaccio further says that very near his death he did write it, and the statement is confirmed by Villani. These mentions give it us as written in Latin prose and in two books, but after them we hear nothing about it. In 1529 the poet and dramatist Trissino printed at Vicenza an Italian translation of it, not under his own name, but under that of Giovan Battista Doria. No indication was given that this was not the original, and for a time it was taken as such. But in 1577 Jacopo Corbinelli published, at Paris, the Latin Text. The MS. which he used, and which for centuries was supposed to be unique, appears to be that rediscovered at Grenoble in 1840, and published in facsimile by MM. Maignien and Prompt in 1892; but there are two other early MSS. One of these, belonging to the Trivulzi, is taken to be as old, perhaps, as the Grenoble, both not improbably being older than 1400. A third, at the Vatican, is a century younger, but still some twenty years older than the first printed (and translated) edition. The usual difficulties have been started over these facts, and over some supposed contradictions between the treatise and Dante's more certain work. But these concern us little, and may be sought, by those who want them, in the editions of the book. It is sufficient to say that few books have a better external testimony, and that the internal

The De Vulgari Eloquio. *Its history and authentication.*

second is in the title of the Grenoble MS. The texts which I use are, for the Latin, Dr Prompt's facsimile of this MS., Venice, Olschki, 1892, and Dr Moore's edition of the *Opere* (Oxford, 1897), with Mr Ferrers-Howell's annotated English translation (London, 1890). This latter is very good as a whole, though of course one may differ as to the rendering of individual terms. The edition of the Società Dantesca by Signor P. Rajna (Florence, 1896) is elaborated with all the minute care by which scholarship in the looser modern vernaculars endeavours to put itself on a level with that in the older and exacter tongues. Unfortunately the emulation, here as elsewhere, is carried as far as the old unworthy tricks of depreciation and abuse of predecessors and rivals. The elaborate commentary is limited, with an almost ferocious scrupulosity, to the barest letter of the text; but another volume containing literary annotation is promised.

difficulties (some of which will be referred to later) are quite insignificant.

We may take it then on its own showing; and, without haggling about dates, be reasonably confident that it was written after Dante's banishment, and of course before his death—that is to say, in the opening years of the fourteenth century. Forgery is practically out of the question, for, as has been said, the oldest manuscripts are some century and a quarter older than Trissino's version, and there could be no conceivable reason why any one late in the fourteenth century—even if he had the wits to forge such a thing, which is begging a huge question—should have abstained from reaping the sole advantage derivable from such a forgery by making it known as Dante's. We take it, then—and may take it with confidence very nearly if not completely absolute—as in two different ways a document of the very highest value, even before its intrinsic worth is considered at all. In the first place, there is the importance of date, which gives us in it the first critical treatise on the literary use of the vernacular, at exactly the point when the various vernaculars of Europe had finished, more or less, their first stage. Secondly, there is the importance of authorship, in that we have, as is hardly anywhere else the case, the greatest creative writer, not merely of one literature but of a whole period of the European world, betaking himself to criticism. If Shakespeare had written the *Discoveries* instead of Ben Jonson, the only possible analogue would have been supplied. Even Homer could not have given us a third, for he could hardly have had the literature to work upon.

Its importance.

As a matter of fact, however, the book, as I shall hope to show, would be of almost the highest interest if it were anonymous. Its intrinsic value has been by no means universally recognised: indeed I hardly know any editor or critic of Dante who has put it in quite its right place. This is, I venture in all humility to think, due mainly to the fact that the historic estimate of criticism in general has hitherto been so rarely taken, and so scantily based. But there are minor reasons. In the first place, the book,

And the scanty recognition thereof.

except by professed Dantists, has been very little studied.[1] And in the second, what I shall endeavour to prove to be its greatest value may, in the curious critical prejudices which still prevail so largely, have told positively against it. It has shocked people to find the author of the *Commedia* indulging in grammatical and prosodic scholasticism; and the shocked ones either do not pause to ask, or refuse to answer, the question whether the said scholasticism had not a good deal to do with the quality of the *Commedia*.

As in the case of other books of importance, we may give a pretty full abstract of the book, which will be all the more desirable in that it is, as has been said, far from well known. The Latin, though not very crabbed, is sometimes peculiar, and some of the terms require careful elucidation.

Abstract of its contents: The "Vulgar Tongue" and "Grammar."

Dante begins by stating in due form his reasons for writing; the absence of any treatise of the kind, the importance of the subject, and so forth. He is going to write about the Vulgar Tongue, and this Vulgar Tongue is that which we acquire, without any rule, by imitating our nurses. But, he says, we also have another and secondary speech, which the Romans called Grammar. The Greeks also have it, and other nations, but not all, while comparatively few individuals possess it, because its acquisition means time and trouble. And the Vulgar Tongue is nobler, because it is more natural: so we shall treat of it.

Here a slight *crux* arises as to what Dante meant by "Grammar": at least (for the first part of his observations is clear enough) what he meant by saying that "the Greeks have it, and others but not all."[2] Are *Grammatica* and "Latin" interchangeable terms? or does he mean that there was a literary as well as a vernacular form of Greek, and literary as well as vernacular forms of Hebrew, Arabic, &c.? The latter seems to suit the argument best up to a certain point; but it is exposed to the difficulty that, if so, Dante would be trying to make, out of the Vulgars, a *Grammatica* for Italian, which nowhere seems to have been his intention. But it is no great matter.

[1] Coleridge, I think, refers to it; but with no adequate recognition.

[2] *Hanc quidem secundariam Græci habent et alii sed non omnes.*

He has so far cleared his ground very well; but, to his own orderly and scholastically educated mind, he does not seem to have done enough. He lays down in chap. ii. that man alone has intercourse by speech. Angels and animals do not want it, for angels communicate intuitively; devils have no need of it;[1] to animals[2] it were useless: and if anybody urges the serpent in Paradise, Balaam's ass, Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* about magpies, these objections can be met in various ways. The real power of speech has been given to man alone. He needed it (chap. iii.) because he has both reason and senses, and therefore must have some medium which will convey the discourse of the former in a manner acceptable to the latter. It is probable (chap. v.) that man spoke before woman, though the earliest recorded speech is assigned to Eve: for man is more excellent. And it is probable that the first word he spoke was "El," "God," and was addressed to God Himself in Paradise. No doubt (vi.) the language was Hebrew. Foolish people may be driven (had Dante heard of the Gaelic claim?) to believe that their own vernacular was that of Adam. But he knows better. Though he drank of Arno before his teeth appeared, and loves Florence so dearly that for the love he bore her is he wrongfully suffering exile—though for the pleasure of his own senses there exists no pleasanter place than Florence, yet he thinks that there are places in the world nobler and more delightful than Tuscany and Florence, and that many nations and races may use a pleasanter and handier speech. The consideration of the Flood, Babel, and the consequent division of speech (chap. vii.) saddens him very much; but the facts are indisputable.

The nature, &c., of the gift of speech.

It is probable that these chapters, coming as they do at the very outset, have, with hasty readers and thinkers, brought some discredit on the book. They exhibit what it used to be, and still is to some extent, the fashion to call the childish side of mediævalism and scholasticism. Every age no doubt has

[1] For the delightfully scholastic (and, like most scholastic things, by no means inept) reasons, first, that as they set God at nought we need take no count of them; secondly, that all they want to know of each other, for their fiendish purposes, is their diabolic quality and rank.

[2] As being solely guided by instinct.

its own childishnesses, and is profoundly convinced that in holding them it has thoroughly put away childish things. I do not myself know that, if it were possible to take a simultaneous horizontal view of the ages, the nineteenth century would be found so very much in advance of the thirteenth in this respect. But putting this aside as matter of separable controversy, we may observe that, in the main body of his argument, Dante is merely arguing, and arguing very sensibly and closely, from premisses which no one educated man in a thousand of his contemporaries would have disputed, and that at the beginning and end there are very notable things. The notable thing at the beginning is the separation of "Grammar" and the "Vulgar Tongue," and the, at that time, exceedingly bold ascription of greater "nobility" to the latter.[1] The notable thing at the end is the unexpectedly cosmopolitan character of Dante's sentiments about the excellence of various countries and their vernaculars. It is true that, for good as well as for evil, there was about Europe then a certain solidarity which has entirely disappeared; but local, as distinct from national, patriotism was as strong, and occasionally as silly, as at any other time. Dante's own attitude puts us at once into a position for literary criticism which neither Greek nor Roman had enjoyed—the Greek losing it by his arrogant assumption of a solitary literary position for his own tongue, and the Roman partly by his imitation of Greek, partly by the lurking desire to make out that Latin was not so very inferior after all.

Division of contemporary tongues.

At any rate, in the chapter (viii.) which follows, there is no deficiency in what we are pleased to call the scientific spirit; on the contrary, any one who knows the historical circumstances of the time can only be amazed at the precision, the general justice, and, on the whole, the particular exactness with which Dante, in full Middle Age, surveys the languages of Europe. He is well aware of the threefold general division of language — Teutonic-Slavonic, Turanian or Tartar, and Romance—and assigns the boundaries quite correctly. He is further aware of the divisions of Romance speech itself, and as he had adopted as his criterion

[1] As to the apparent contradiction with the *Convito*, *v. infra*.

of Teutonic speech different forms of "yea" ("jo") for the word of affirmation, so he uses the same criterion in this case. Of Romance-speaking nations he says, some say "oc," some "oil," and some "si." The first are "Spaniards," the second Frenchmen, the third Italians. The connection of "Spaniards" and "oc" need excite no surprise. Castilian, though in existence, and already provided with the noble *Poema del Cid* and other documents, was as yet by no means the dominant language of Spain. In particular, Aragon and Catalonia, which spoke a Provençal dialect, had far more to do with Italy than Castile: Galicia, which all Europe visited in pilgrimage to the shrine of Santiago, also favoured the "oc," and Provençal was actually later than this the dialect of Portugal, if not of all Spain, for certain literary purposes. And the Spanish kingdom of Aragon was infinitely the most important country that spoke "oc."

And of the subdivisions of Romance.

Proceeding, Dante illustrates the relationship of the three tongues by observing that all call most important things (God, heaven, earth, living, dying, loving—the selection is not negligible) by forms of the same Latin originals. In the next chapter he continues the stress on this point, producing literary and poetical quotations, from Provençal (Giraut de Borneil), French (Thibaut of Navarre), and Italian (Guido Guinicelli), of the word *Amor*; and points out—thus ever drawing nearer, in true methodic way, to his special subject—that the variations between the three great Romance speeches are produced, in each language, by dialectic differences. And he has, on the fact and on the consequent necessity of establishing some common centrical form by Grammar,[1] observations which lack neither truth nor sense. Then, Which is the best of the three Romance forms? He will not say, only timidly advancing for Italian that *si* is nearest *sic*. Otherwise, each has strong claims. *Oil* is not only easier and pleasanter,[2] but whatever has been composed or translated in vernacular

[1] It is desirable to note that the original confusion, or, to speak more correctly, ambiguity of "Grammar" is curiously illustrated in this close context. Here the first "grammar" seems to denote literary as opposed to vernacular tongue: the second can only mean Latin.

[2] *Facilior et delectabilior.*

prose belongs to it, the "most fair intricacies of Arthur,"[1] those of Trojans and Romans, &c. *Oc* was first employed for poetry, being more finished and sweeter. Italian has the sweetest and most refined poetry[2] of all, and seems to be the closest to "grammar."[3]

He will not, however, attempt *componere lites*,[4] but consider the variations, &c., of the Vulgar Tongue itself—*i.e.*, Italian—though, as we shall see, he does not hesitate to draw illustrations from the others. He first takes the Apennines as his language-watershed, and allowing fifteen main dialects, not a few of which are subdivided, he proceeds to examine their claims, clearing away the bad ones. As the Romans think they ought to have precedence[5] (note the crisp touch of life in this), let us give it them—by kicking their claims out of the way at once.[6] The *alma sdegnosa* gives something more than a hint of itself in the description of Roman dialect as a "tristiloquy," the ugliest of all the vernacular dialects; which is no wonder, since they stink worst of all in the deformity of their customs and morals. The Marchers of Ancona and the Spoletans go next, each of the rejected ones having a scornful tag of his own barbarism tied to his tail, as Dante ejects him from the competition. And he tells us, as if it settled the matter (for, as we shall see, the Canzone is rather a fetish with Dante), "many Canzoni have been written in contempt of them." The Milanese, the Bergamasks, the Aquileans and Istrians follow, with all the mountainous and country *patois*,[7] and the Sardinians, who are not Latins, though "to be joined with them," and who only imitate Latin as apes do men. After this rapid sifting (he uses the metaphor) a new chapter is necessary.

The Italian Dialects: *Some rejected at once.*

Of those "kept in the sieve" Sicilian claims the first place. Indeed Dante acknowledges that "whatsoever the Italians

[1] *Arturi regis ambages pulcerrimæ.* This observation is not quite negligible in the endless debate about the priority of verse or prose in these legends.

[2] *Qui dulcius subtiliusque poetati vulgariter sunt.*

[3] Cf. note opposite.

[4] *Judicium relinquentes* is his own phrase.

[5] *Se cunctis præponendos existimant.*

[6] *In hac eradicatione sive discerptione non immerito eos aliis præponamus.*

[7] *Montaninas et rusticanas loquelas.*

poetise is called Sicilian." He admits this, but says it is merely due to the fact that Sicilian princes, or princes resident in Sicily, Frederick the Emperor and his son Manfred, have been patrons of literature, and have thus attached the best Italian genius to the Sicilian court. But he says (after an indignant digressory denunciation of contemporary sovereigns) that there is no special value in the common Sicilian dialect, which indeed is seldom used for poetry at all, while of that which *is* used, more to follow. As for the Apulians, there have been some good writers among them, but their ordinary speech is spoilt with barbarisms.[1]

Others— Sicilian, Apulian, Tuscan, and Genoese.

But what of the Tuscans? Dante can only repeat that cosmopolitan criticism, which, though it would be very illiberal to impute it wholly to his exile, was no doubt assisted thereby. They may madly assert their title to the possession of the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue, and even some distinguished men may have condescended to the Tuscan vernacular. But let us examine them town by town. Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Siena, Arezzo are hit off each in a sentence expressing its boast, and, we may suppose, expressing it with some provincialism. But Dante says, when men really to be admired, Guido, Lapo, and "another"[2] of Florence, and Cino da Pistoia, have written, it is in "curial," not in the vulgar Tuscan tongue.

As for the Genoese, the annihilation of the letter Z would strike them dumb, for they can say nothing without it.

Then he crosses the Apennines[3] and decides successively that Romagnese, in its various divisions, and Venetian, are full of drawbacks and vulgarities.[4] After which a whole chapter (xv.) is given to the dialect of Bologna. It is perhaps better than any other, and why? Because it borrows the best things *from* the others, as, for instance, Sordello the Mantuan borrowed from Cremona, Brescia, and

Venetian: Some good in Bolognese.

[1] *Turpiter barbarizant.*

[2] *Guidonem, Lapum et unum alium Florentinos.* It is needless to say who is *unus alius.*

[3] *Frondiferos humeros Apennini*— a more affectionate if less picturesque touch than Mr Ruskin's "angry Apennine" and Mr Browning's "wind-swept gash" thereof.

[4] Hildebrand of Padua is excepted, as *Nitentem divertere a materno et ad curiale vulgare intendere.* Two sonnets of his are said to be now extant.

Verona. On the other hand, Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio are too Lombardic, and though they have lent a touch of piquancy to Bolognese, cannot create a good literary dialect for themselves. Still Bolognese, though better than other individual dialects, because more composite, is not the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue, for otherwise Guido Guinicelli and other great Bolognese poets would not have departed from it. So down with the sieve; for, as for places like Trent and Turin, they are too near the frontier, and if they were *pulcherrima* as they are *turpissima* they would not be *vere Latinum*.

The "Illustrious" Language none of these, but their common measure.

Having thus for fifteen chapters pursued a sort of "Rule of False" in order to catch that panther,[1] the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue, by the *a posteriori* method, Dante determines to track her *a priori*. He calls Logic to his aid, and observes that every individual, species, genus is subject to a common measure. The measure of individual conduct is Virtue; of conduct between man and man, Law; in public behaviour, national manners and customs. So too there must be some norm, some common measure of all Italian tongues and dialects, and this, perceptible in all, abiding in none, will be what is sought for. This is the—

1. Illustre.
2. Cardinale.
3. Aulicum; et
4. Curiale vulgare in Latio.

Each of these epithets has then to be discussed.

Its four characteristics.

So we have the substance, the underlying and fashioning unity, of Italian defined as a tongue possessing a quadripartite differentia, and so it becomes necessary to explain the four parts. *Illustrious*, as the seventeenth chapter, devoted to it, explains, is something that "shines forth," *illuminans et illuminatum*. Men are so called who, having been well trained, are great trainers, like Numa

[1] This beast is of course not here referred to, as in the well-known passage at the beginning of the *Inferno*, as a type of vice, but, as in *Inf.*, xvi. 106, as a desirable prey. The beauty of the panther's skin, the sweet breath fabulously attributed to it, and so forth, sometimes gave it a wholly favourable place in mediæval fantasy, as in one of the prettiest fragments of Anglo-Saxon verse, the "Panther" of the Exeter Book, where it is a type of Christ.

Pompilius and Seneca. This is what the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue of Italy is. It has cleared off much rubbish, as in Cino da Pistoia. It attracts even the unwilling. It exalts those who practise it. They surpass kings, marquises, counts. It gives a glory which even we, exiles as we are, acknowledge as sweetening the bitterness of our exile. Therefore it is Illustrious.

The three other epithets enjoy but a chapter between them. It is *Cardinal*, for as a door turns on a hinge, so all the throng of dialects turns on it. It is *Aulic*, because, if we Italians had a Court, it would be spoken there, and because, as a matter of fact, all those who enjoy courtly frequentation speak it. It is *Curial* because, though as in the Aulic case the conditions are wanting, it would be spoken in the great Law Courts of Italy if they existed, and it presents the action of a great Court of Law in trying and sifting cases. This is the proper Italian language, common to all, aimed at (if unconsciously) by all, giving the real key to all.

And so the first book ends, with the establishment on logical bases (none the weaker because the struts and props of them are sometimes decorated with a bygone ornamentation) at once of the necessity and the fact of a literary language for Italy, a language combining the merits, and purified from the defects, of the various local kinds of speech.

The Second Book—Why Dante deals with poetry only.

The First Book of the *De Vulgari Eloquio* has been chiefly concerned with language, though—as it is of the very highest importance to observe—always with a side-glance at literature. The Second passes to literature itself, at least to that part of literature which was almost the only serious part to the earlier Middle Ages —namely, poetry. If we wanted anything to show us what a man of letters Dante was, it would be found in the apology which he makes at the beginning of this book for not dealing with Rhetoric at large, but only with Poetic. It is simply that "prosaicants" usually get their language from "inventors," and "invention" remains a solid example to them, not *vice versa*. This, perhaps, with some exceptions (the chief among them he has himself referred to in citing the French Arthurian legend), was true in his time, though it was ceasing to be true;

and a certain amount of truth remains still, greatly as the circumstances have changed. There is, he goes on to say, a kind of primacy about verse; so let us deal with it *secundum quod metricum est.*

Now, ought writers in verse to write *vulgariter*? Yes, he thought. The best things require the best language, and that, as we have seen, is the Illustrious Vernacular. Things not so good will be improved by the best expression. So all verse-writers should use it, at least at first sight, though we must alter this conception on further thought. The Illustrious language demands illustrious writers (*alma sdegnosa* again!), and not only that, but the best thoughts or subjects. Very inferior persons writing on very inferior subjects had better *not* use the Illustrious, for an ugly woman never looks uglier than when dressed in gold and silk.

All good poetry should be in the Illustrious.

Now what subjects are good enough for the Illustrious Vernacular? Only Three: *Salus, Venus, Virtus*—in other words, War, Love, and Moral Beauty, which means philosophy *plus* religion. Dante reaches this conclusion in the queer-looking but perhaps not easily improvable manner usual with him, by the *prior* and the *posterior* roads alike. These subjects are, first, the three things of most importance to a Vegetable-Animal-Rational-creature like man, and they are also those discussed by the best writers in the Vulgar Tongue, Bertran de Born, Arnaut Daniel, Cino da Pistoia, &c. But he does not find that any Italian has written on the subject of *Salus* or Arms. (An ominous fact!)

The subjects of High Poetry—War, Love, Virtue.

So much for subject; now for form. What forms are there of Illustrious Vulgar Verse? Some have written Canzoni, some Ballades, some Sonnets, some other and irregular forms. The best of these are Canzoni, for a wilderness of reasons, good, not very good, indifferent, and bad, the strongest of which, though not expressed, evidently is that Dante likes Canzoni best and knows he writes them well. They unite, he says, all the best points of art; the works of the best poets are found in them. So let us write of Canzoni, putting off Ballades, &c., to the Fourth Book—which, alas! we have not.

Its form: Canzoni.

What is Poetry? It is *fictio rhetorica in musica posita.* This is so important that no passing criticism of it will do, and we must postpone the discussion.

Definition of Poetry.

But here comes in the curious mediæval humility which made a poet like Dante regard himself as inferior to Ovid, and Lucan, and Statius. Our poets differ from the "great" poets, the "regular" ones; but they ought to approach them as nearly as possible, and, as *Magister noster Horatius* teaches, take a suitable subject. And then they must decide what style to write in. If in the Tragic or Higher style, the Illustrious Vernacular will be suitable; if in the comic, a mixed or intermediate style; if in Elegy, the lower. But these two latter are again relegated to the lost, or never written, Fourth Book. Canzoni must be written in the Tragic style, and the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue. This is to be attained when, with the gravity of the meaning, not merely the pride of the verse, but the loftiness of the phrasing and the excellence of the words, agrees. It is no light matter to compose in this way; the most strenuous efforts are necessary. And, therefore, let the folly of those be confessed who, guiltless of art and science, and trusting to their wits alone, break out into the highest song on the highest subjects.

Its styles, and the constituents of the grand style.

So the considerations are marked out, the Gravitas Sententiæ having been already distributed between War, Love, and Virtue.

1. Superbia Carminum.
2. Constructionis elatio.
3. Excellentia vocabulorum.

Beginning with metric, Dante, like a sensible man, confines himself here to the teachings of experience, eschewing all argument in the vague. What lines have actually given the best results in the Illustrious Vernacular? He looks them over, and finds that lines have varied from three syllables to eleven, that those of five, seven, and eleven are best of all, and that that of eleven (in which he rightly includes the French decasyllable with its weak ending) is the best of these best. Seven comes next; then five, then three. Nine is not good, because divisible into three threes. Even lines are "rude," by which he means (as is undoubtedly true) that they

Superbia Carminum.

do not suit the structure of Italian. The hendecasyllable is that *superbissimum carmen* that we sought.

Next for the phrase or construction. Here Dante becomes a little difficult, chiefly because he uses peculiar words, which have not been always judiciously translated. He says that there is first the "insipid" style, that without flavour (*sapor*) or individual character, which merely states a fact, his example being *Petrus amat multum dominam Bertam.*

Construc-tionis elatio.

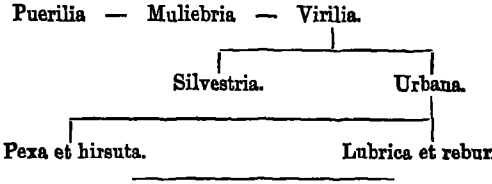
Next there is the purely "sapid" or tasteful, described oddly as that of "rigid scholars or masters"; the *sapidus et venustus*, which is of those who have drunk superficial draughts of rhetoric; and the sapid, venust, and also lofty, which is the best of all. The examples of these shall be given below,[1] but they are hard to follow in detail, though the classes are clear enough, corresponding to (1) sheer prose, (2) efforts at style, (3) ornate prose without much distinction, (4) style achieved.

This last, of course, is what the poet must aim at, and again examples of hitting it are given. But the chapter ends with a valuable catalogue of the "great," the "regular" poets: Virgil, Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, Statius, and Lucan, with, in prose, Cicero, Livy, Pliny, Frontinus, and (O ye groves of Blarney!) Paulus Orosius. Let people read these, and not talk about Guido of Arezzo.

Lastly the words.

Excellentia Verborum.

Here the subdivision is again of great importance and some difficulty. Dante distinguishes a sort of tree—



[1] Sapid pure: *Piget me cunctis, sed pietatem majorem illorum habeo, quicunque in exilio tabescentes, patriam tantum somniando revisunt.*

Sapid and venust: *Laudabilis discretio Marchionis Estensis et sua magnificentia præparata cunctis illum facit esse dilectum.*

Sapid, venust, and excelse: *Ejecta maxima parte florum de sinu tuo, Florentia, nequicquam Trinacriam Totila serus advivit.*

All these words (save perhaps *reburra*, which, however, a remembrance of the French *à rebours* will clear up at once) are easy to understand, if sometimes rather hard of application.

Now, according to Dante, *Pexa et Hirsŭta* are *grandiosa*, while *lubrica et reburra in superfluum sonant.* And it will be most specially important to use the "sieve," for, looking to the poets who have succeeded in the Illustrious Vernacular, *sola vocabula nobilissima* are to be left therein. "Childish"[1] words must be left out altogether: "feminine"[2] words are too soft, "silvan"[3] words too rough, nor will *lubrica* nor *reburra*,[4] though *urbana*, do. So *pexa*[5] *et hirsuta*[6] alone are left.

All this terminology is, of course, more than a little obscure, and the explanation of the obscurities rather concerns a commentator on Dante than a historian of literary criticism. But the explanation, given by the critic-poet himself, of *pexa et hirsuta* does concern us, and is interesting. The former, it seems, are words which are trisyllabic, or "neighbours to trisyllabity," without an aspirate, without an acute or circumflexed accent, without double *x*'s or *z*'s, without the conjunction of two liquids, or the placing of them after a mute, which freedoms give a certain sweetness. *Hirsuta*, on the other hand, are all others which, like the monosyllabic pronouns and articles, cannot be dispensed with, or which, though the above uglinesses have not been "combed out" of them, still, when mixed with combed-out words, are ornamental. He includes in this last class *sovramagnificentissimamente*, a hendecasyllabic in itself. He would not even mind *onorificabilitudinitate*, which has thirteen syllables in two of its Latin cases, if it were not by its length excluded from Italian verse.

Pexa et hirsuta.

So having got the sticks of words for our faggot the canzone, and the cords of construction and classification to bind them up,[7] let us set to work to the actual binding and faggoting, before which something more must be said about the faggot itself, the Canzone. The Canzone (*cantio*)

The Canzone.

[1] As *mamma* and *babbo*.
[2] As *dolciada* and *piacevole*.
[3] As *gregia*.
[4] As *femina* and *corpo*.
[5] As *amore*, *donna*, *virtute*.
[6] As *terra*, *onore*, *speranza*, *gravitate*, and on to *sovramagnificentissimamente*.
[7] *Fustibus et torquibus ad fascem.*

is the action or passion of singing, just as a "reading" or book (*lectio*) is the action or passion of reading. A little metaphysic follows on *actio* and *passio*, and the fact that the *cantio* is *actio* when composed, *passio* when sung or acted. But is the *cantio* the words or the tune? Surely the words; nobody calls the tune *canzone*. In fact, all words written for music may in a sense be called *canzoni*, even ballads, even sonnets, even poems in Latin (*regulariter*). But *we* are speaking of the supreme canzone, like Dante's *Donne ch' avete*. It is "a tragic composition" of equal stanzas, without *responsorium* (dialogue or antiphon). The last six chapters concern us less, because they are wholly occupied with the particular rhyming, lining, and stanza-fashion of the canzone itself, and, interesting as they are, overflow our limits, except as a particular example of the general kind of criticism which has been so laboriously built up.

With the conclusion of this the tractate stops abruptly, nor have we any indication of what the Third Book was to consist of, though the Fourth, as we have seen above, is more than once referred to. The loss of both must be regarded as one of the most serious that the history of criticism has suffered.

Importance of the book.

Yet the possession of what we have is no mean consolation, and I must be excused for repeating an expression of the extremest surprise at the comparatively small attention which the book has received, and at the slighting fashion in which it has been treated by some of those who have paid attention to it. For myself, I am prepared to claim for it, not merely the position of the most important critical document between Longinus and the seventeenth century at least, but one of intrinsic importance on a line with that of the very greatest critical documents of all history. There is no need at all to lay much stress on the mere external attractiveness, unusual as that may be, of the combination in one person of the greatest poet and the first, if not the sole, great critic of the Middle Ages. The tub can stand on its own bottom.

In the first place, it only requires acquaintance with that previous history of the subject, which we have here endeavoured to unfold, to see that we have the inestimable advantage of a

quite new and independent treatment of that subject. There is no direct evidence that Dante knew the *Poetics*:[1] we see that he cites Horace and cites him *magnificentissime*. But the Epistle to the Pisos might never have been written, for any sign there is of direct influence from it on Dante's method. So, too, singular as is the resemblance between the spirit of him and the spirit of Longinus; remarkable as is the coincidence between the words of both about words; and possible as the John of Sicily reference[2] makes it that Dante might have known the Great Unknown of Criticism—yet there is not the faintest evidence that he *did* know him, and an almost overwhelming probability that he did not. To the method of no classical predecessor in pure criticism does his method bear the smallest resemblance, even if faint resemblances might be pointed out in phrase.

Independence and novelty of its method.

But it is still more remarkable that, steeped to the lips as he is in scholastic lore—though *trivium* and *quadrivium* must have been at his fingers' ends—the *De Vulgari Eloquio*, even in mentioning Rhetoric itself, shows not the faintest tincture of that scholastic rhetoric which we have noticed. There is not so much as an allusion to the Figures: they have been, for Dante on this occasion, as completely banished from *rerum natura* as poor Albucius feared they would be, if his judges disallowed his pleading.[3] The familiar Arts of Composition make no appearance: Beginning, Middle, and End are with the Figures. If we did not know that these things must have been as familiar to Dante as the alphabet or the multiplication-table to any modern child, we might think, from this treatise, that he had never heard of them.

It would seem, indeed, without too much guess-work, that, despite his attempts to assimilate writing *vulgariter et regulariter*, Dante had an unconscious and an infinitely salutary instinct, telling him that *regulariter* and *vulgariter* were *not* the same thing. He may have sometimes thought that the former was the nobler; even in his disdainful soul, the touching humility

[1] It is thought that Petrarch may have known the German thirteenth-century version in Latin.

[2] *V. supra*, p. 187.

[3] *V. supra*, p. 238.

of the Middle Ages existed, as we know, to such an extent that he could put Virgil, who may be worthy to unloose his shoe-latchet, in a position above himself. But something must have warned him to keep the two apart, to approach the criticism of the Illustrious Vernacular literature by a path *nullius ante trita solo.*

Dante's attention to Form.

That path, as has been pointed out, is in fact a double approach: we might almost say that the restless manyminded-ness of Dante attacks the hill on half-a-dozen different sides at once. We have a chain of mainly *a priori* argument, reaching from the origin and nature of language to the completely built and fitted-out *canzone.* We have careful surveys of existing language and literature, with the keenest observation bent upon what is the actual state of each, on what each has actually achieved. But besides these two ways of approach, neither of which is at all like those of the ancient critics, there is a third difference which is more striking still: and that is that the critic's attention is evidently from the first fixed, not exclusively, but, from the point of view of his business, mainly, on questions of form, expression, result, rather than on questions of matter, conception, plan. Not exclusively—let that be emphatically repeated: but still mainly.

His disregard of Oratory.

Again we see, incidentally, but none the less to an important effect, that he has, no doubt by the mere operation of the lapse of ages in part, in part by the activity of his own intellect, and the character of the matter presented to it, got rid of divers prejudices which weighed upon the ancients. It is not a just retort, when it is said that he has completely got rid of the oratorical preoccupation, to say that he is only dealing with Poetics. For the ancients themselves this preoccupation was constant, even when they dealt with Poetics. and Dante does, as a matter of fact, make references to prose which show that he did not dream (as how indeed should he?) of oratory having any pre-eminence. And at the same time that the fruitful modern literatures helped him to get rid of this, the greatest drawback or interfering flaw of ancient criticism, they helped him to get rid of another, the ignorance of prose fiction. True, he may in his quaint love Latin use *inventor* for

poeta; but the simple reference to the prose Arthurian, Trojan, and Roman legends shows that the gap, which led Aristotle and all the rest astray, had been filled up.

The influence on him of Romance.

Yet again, the character of the Romance poetry which he chiefly had before him, as well as (if he knew anything of them, which is quite possible) that of the German *minne-singers*, was such as to require positively, from any vigorous and subtle intellect, a quite different treatment from that appropriate to most ancient poetry. The war-songs might stand on no very different footing; but, as he admits, there were no war-songs in Italian. The mystical passion and the mystical religion of the other two divisions are like nothing in ancient poetry, except scraps and flashes of things which must have been mostly unknown to Dante,—the choruses of the Greek Poets, Catullus, Lucretius, and some things in the Greek Anthology. There was in most cases no action at all; the subject, though varying and twisting in facet and form, like a mountain mist, was always more or less the same; the expression of the poet's passionate intense individual feeling and thought was all, and of this no *general* criticism was possible. The forms, on the other hand, the language, the arrangements, these were matters of intense, novel, and pressing interest. The ancient critic, at the very earliest date at which we have any utterances of his *in extenso*, had a sort of catholic faith already provided for him on these points. Tragedy, Comedy, Oratory, History, Lyric, &c., were established forms. Rhetoric, though interesting, was almost as scientific as arithmetic or geometry. As for language, you imitated the best models, and did not play personal tricks. Besides, it was quite a minor matter.

And of comparative criticism.

Lastly, we see that (again half, or more than half, unconsciously and instinctively) Dante has been brought by the "forward flowing tide of time" to a more advanced position in respect of comparative criticism. No ancient critic could have made such a survey as he makes of the different languages of Europe; no ancient critic did make such a survey of the dialects of Greek as he makes of the dialects of Italian. That curious spirit of routine which (valuable as it was in the time and in the circumstances) mars ancient liter-

ature to some extent, shows itself nowhere more oddly than here. You used Æolic dialect for lyric poetry, because Sappho and Alcæus were Æolians; Doric for pastorals, because Theocritus and the others were Dorians. You might use Ionic in history because Herodotus was a Halicarnassian; and Homer preserved a special dialect for you in epic likewise. But otherwise you wrote in Attic, not because Attic was the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue of Greece (as it very nearly if not quite was), but because an enormous proportion of the best writers in most departments were Athenians. So in Latin you might—almost must—use loose verse, and familiar or abstruse phrase, in satire, but not elsewhere.

Of this there is no trace in Dante, though he may allot his Illustrious tongue to one kind, his Intermediate and Lower to others. He may indeed cite, as a subsidiary argument, the fact that such and such a one has used such and such a dialect or form, but it is only subsidiary. He is, in effect, looking about to see, partly how the reason of things will go, partly what has actually had the best effect. He, groping dimly in the benighted, the shackled Middle Ages, actually attains to a freer and more enlightened kind of criticism than the Greeks, with all their "play of mind," all their "lucidity," had reached.

And his bent towards formal criticism—towards those considerations of prosody, of harmony, of vocabulary, of structure, which, when they are considered to-day, even now send some critics into (as the poet says)

"A beastly froth of rage"

against those who so consider them—is all the more important, because not the most impudent accuser of the brethren can bring against Dante the charge of being a mere formalist, of being indifferent to meaning, of having no "criticism of life" in him, of lacking "high seriousness," attention to conduct, care for meaning and substance. On the contrary, there is not a poet in the whole vast range of poetry, not the Greek tragedians at their gravest and highest chorus-pitch, not Lucretius in his fervour of Idealist Materialism, not Shakespeare in the profoundest moments

The poetical differentia according to him.

of Macbeth, or Prospero, or Hamlet, not Milton, not Wordsworth, who is more passionately ideal, "thoughtful," penetrated and intoxicated with the "subject," than Dante is. But he, thanks very mainly to the logical training of the despised scholasticism, thanks partly to the mere progress of time, the refreshing of the human mind after its season of sleep—most of all no doubt to his own intense and magnificent poetical genius—had completely separated and recognised the differentia of poetry, its presentation of the subject in metrical form with musical accompaniment, whether of word or of actual music.[1] He knows—he actually says in effect—that prosemen may have the treatment of the same subjects; but he knows that the poet's treatment is different, and he goes straight for the difference.

His antidote to the Wordsworthian heresy.

And where does he find it? Exactly where Wordsworth five hundred years later refused to find it, in Poetic Diction and in Metre. The contrast of the *De Vulgari Eloquio* and of the *Preface* to *Lyrical Ballads* is so remarkable that it may be doubted whether there is any more remarkable thing of the kind in literature. Whether Wordsworth was acquainted with the treatise it is impossible to say. (Coleridge certainly knew of it, though it is not quite clear whether he had read it.) But it is improbable, for Wordsworth was not a wide reader. And, moreover, though in tendency the two tractates are diametrically opposed, he nowhere answers Dante; but, on the contrary, is answered by Dante, with an almost uncanny anticipation of the privilege of the last word, in a word five hundred years earlier.

We shall have to return to this matter in dealing with Wordsworth himself. But for the present let us confine ourselves to Dante.

His handling of metre.

The details of his metrical part need the lesser notice because they are of the more limited and particular application. Had Dante completed his book, it would still have had the limitation of dealing solely with Romance, if not

[1] Some have assumed that Dante thinks all high poetry must be "set" in the common sense. He does not say so, and every consideration is against it. The "rhetorical fiction set in music" is obviously the opposition of poetry to *prose*, and nothing more.

exclusively with Italian, poetry. And with particular episodes we shall only meddle when they are closely connected with general critical quarrels. But his method is worth a word or two, because it is again, precisely, that apparently loose but really unerring mixture of general reasoning and particular observation which the critic requires, which prevents him from being ever exactly scientific, but which gives to his craft the dignity, the difficulty, the versatile charm of art. His recognition of the hendecasyllable, not merely as the line preferred by the best writers in Italian, but as the longest line really manageable in Italian, would be sufficient proof of this.

Of diction.

But he is considerably more interesting on diction, because here his observations (*mutatis mutandis*, and that in extremely few cases and unimportant measure) are of universal application. The theory of Poetic Diction, the twin pillar of the temple of Poetry, had been put by Longinus in one flashing axiom, true, sound, illuminative for ever and ever. But he had not elaborated this; he had even, in some cases, as in his remarks on the Εἰς ἐρωμέναν, given occasion to those who blaspheme the doctrine. Dante, with no such single phrase (which indeed the odd mongrel speech he uses denied him), expresses the doctrine far more fully, elaborates it, establishes it soundly, and, moreover, is never in the very least inconsistent with himself about it. Even Aristotle himself would have joined no direct issue with the quadripartite division of the necessities of serious poetry as *gravitas sententiæ* and *superbia carminum, constructionis elatio* and *excellentia verborum;* but he would have given the first preponderance over all the others, and would have laid descending stress on the rest. It may almost be said that Dante exactly reverses the order. The *gravitas sententiæ* is not denied, but assumed as a thing of course, common to all good matter in verse and prose alike. The *superbia carminum* is a matter of investigation; but when you have got your form of *cantio*, &c., settled, that *is* settled. It is upon the third and the fourth, which are, briefly, Style and Diction, that he bends his whole strength, and that he exhibits his most novel, most important, most eternally valid criticism.

It has been said that the examples, both Latin and Italian,

His standards of style.

produced in the chapter on Style (that is to say, the construction or arrangement of selected phrase as opposed to selection of the component words) are not free from difficulty. But if we examine them all carefully together, something will emerge from the comparison. In the four Latin sentences[1] (for translations here are totally useless) we observe that the first[2] is a mere statement of fact, possessing, indeed, that complete expression of the meaning which Coleridge so oddly postulates as the differentia of style, but possessing nothing more—nourishing, in short, but not "sapid." The next[3] is carefully ("tastefully") arranged according to the scholastic rules—verb at the end, important words at end or beginning of clause, &c., but nothing more. The charm (*venustas*) of the third[4] is more difficult to identify; but it would seem to consist in a sort of superficially rhetorical declamation. But there is no difficulty in discovering in what the fourth[5] sentence differs from the rest. There is the conceit of the "casting out of the flowers" with the interwoven play of *florum* and *Florentia*, the apostrophe to the town, the double alliteration of *florum*, *Florentia*, *Trinacriam*, *Totila*, with the reverse order of length in the words, and their vowel arrangement. And in almost all the verse vernacular examples, though it may not always be easy to discern their exact attraction for Dante, we shall find the same alliteration—

"Sols sui qui sai lo sobrafan que me sortz;"

the same vowel-music—

"Dreit Amor qu' en mon cor repaire;"

or a combination of this music with careful mounting and falling rhythm, as in

"Si com l' arbres, que per sobrecarcar."

In other words, we shall find, in all, devices for making the common uncommon, for giving the poetic strangeness, unex-

[1] *V. supra*, p. 429, and note.
[2] *Petrus amat*, &c.
[3] *Piget me cunctis*, &c.
[4] *Laudabilis discretio*, &c.
[5] *Ejecta maxima*, &c.

pectedness, charm,—by mere arrangement, by arrangement *plus* music, and so forth.

The contempt of style as something "vulgar," which had beset all antiquity (save always Longinus), would have alone prevented the ancients from criticising in this way, even if the lack of various language had not done so.

And so we find, on the threshold, or hardly even on the threshold, of what is commonly called modern literature, an anticipation, and more than an anticipation, of what is really modern criticism. Of course this is a disputable even more than a disputed statement. Of course there are many respectable authorities who will not hear of it, who will accuse those who make it of mere will-worship, perhaps even of gross error, for assuming any such thing. Yet it may be said in all humility, but after a very considerable number of years of study of a subject to which little general attention has been given, that there *is* this difference between ancient and modern criticism, and that it appears in the *De Vulgari Eloquio*. I shall be content, I shall even be much obliged, if any one will point out to me, in the authors who have been hitherto considered, or in any who may have been overlooked, a passage like this. I can only say that, in my reading, I have found none.

The "Chapter of the Sieve."

But the chapter of words—the Chapter of the Sieve, as we may call it—is that which contains the real heart and kernel of Dante's criticism. For, dwell as much as he may on the importance of arrangement and phrase, it is impossible that these should be beautiful without beautiful words to make them of. And his system of "sifting," quaint as its phraseology may seem at first sight, arbitrary as some of its divisions may appear, and here and there difficult as it may be exactly to follow him, is a perfectly sound scheme, and only requires working out at greater length. The objection to *puerilia*, though it may be too sweepingly expressed, is absolutely just, and cuts away Wordsworth's childishnesses by anticipation. That to "effeminate" words, "silvan" words, words too "slippery" and too much "brushed the wrong way," is, in its actual form, perhaps somewhat too closely connected

with the peculiarities of the Italian language. We can understand that the snarling sound of the *r* in *gregia* and *corpo*—the *silvestre* and the *reburrum*—may have offended the delicate Italian musical ear; and it is perfectly easy for a pretty well-educated English one to perceive that *donna*, with the ring of the *n*'s and the sudden descent—the falcon drop—to *a*, is a far more poetical word than *femina*, where, except the termination, there is no hold for the voice at all; it merely "slips over" the "lubric" syllables *fe* and *mi*. But it is much more difficult to understand the objection to *dolciada* and *piacevole* as too effeminate. Not only is *dolciada* itself a very charming word to *us*, but it is impossible to see anything more effeminate in it than in many of those which Dante admits and admires. These things, however, will always happen.

The pexa.

The metaphor of the *pexa* and *hirsuta*, odd as it seems, is not difficult to work out when we have once accepted the analogy of hair, for which in itself it would not be difficult to find a more or less fanciful justification. The merely "glossy"—smooth, soft, insufficient—will not do, and those "brushed the wrong way" still less. What is wanted is *natural* curl and wave—with light and colour in them, of course, though not mere gloss. This may be either the result of careful "combing out" of all tangle and disorder, or it may be wilder grace, the *hirsutum*, the "floating hair" of *our* poet. Dante's rigid orthodoxy makes him assign very strict qualification to the *pexa*. They are to be trisyllabic or *vicinissima* to this—that is to say, they are either to be amphibrachs complete —*amore, difesa, salute*—or words like *donna*, on the one hand, or *letizia*[1] on the other, which, by a slight rest of the voice or a little slur of it, can be made amphibrachic in character. And why? Because these amphibrachic words help, as no others can do, to give that trochaic swing, with little intervals between, which supplies the favourite rhythm of Italian poetry, as in the very instance given a little later by Dante from his own poetry—

"Donne *ch'* avete *inte*lletto *d'* amore"—

[1] This word is most unluckily misprinted "litiria" in Mr Ferrers-Howell's version.

where the rhythm (as opposed to the actual scansion) of the line is represented by almost sinking the italicised syllables, and leaving the four main trochees to carry the rock of the verse on their backs. The dislike to aspirates, to double *x*'s and *z*'s, to certain collocations of consonants, &c., is again purely Italian, though it would not be difficult to assign somewhat similar qualifications to the *pexa* of other languages.

The hirsuta.

But Dante is far too free and far too opulent a poet to confine himself, or recommend others to confine themselves, to a mere "prunes and prism"—to simple prettiness of precious words. The *hirsuta*, the more careless ordered vocabulary, must be had too sometimes, because you cannot do without them, as in the case of the monosyllabic particles, copulatives, and what not, sometimes as dissyllables, and polysyllables, which will make an ornamental effect by combination and contrast with the *pexa*. Here, yet once more, there may be difficulties with the individual cases; it is indeed hard to see the possibility of beauty, even in the most combed-out company, of such a word as *disavventuratissimamente:* but the principle is clear and sound. What that principle is we may shortly state when we have given a glance at Dante's other and much less important critical utterances, contained in the undoubtedly genuine *Convito*, and in the sometimes, but perhaps captiously, disputed *Letter to Can Grande.*

Other critical loci *in Dante.*

The Epistle to Can Grande.

This last,[1] which, as is well known, sets itself forth as a dedication of the *Paradiso* to the Lord of Verona, contains a kind of expository criticism by the author of the *Commedia* itself. There is nothing in it inconsistent with the *De Vulgari*, but the method is very much more scholastic and jejune. There are six things to be inquired about in any serious matter—the subject, the agent, the form, the end, the title, the kind of philosophy.

The *Paradiso* is different from the other two *cantiche* in subject, form, and title, not in author, end, and philosophic tone.

[1] Original, tenth and last of the Latin *Epistles*, ed. Moore, p. 414. Those who wish for an English translation will find one in the Appendix to Miss Katharine Hillard's translation of the *Convito* (p. 390, London 1889).

The meaning or subject is partly literary, partly allegorical; the form is duplex—the external by *cantiche*, cantos, verses; while the method or internal form is poetic, figurative, &c. The title is, "Here beginneth the Comedy of D. A., Florentine by birth not disposition." Comedy comes from, &c., tragedy from, &c. As Comedy begins ill, and ends well, we call this a comedy. It is in the vulgar tongue: its end is evangelic, its philosophy ethical and practical.

There is little to notice here except the poet's comparative depreciation of the Vulgar Tongue as "humble and weak,"[1] but this of course is only said rhetorically.

The curious First Book of the *Convito*[2] not merely contains the promise of the *De Vulgari*,[3] but is a sort of pendent to it, being an elaborate excuse for writing the book in the Vulgar Tongue itself. Its expressions are not always in literal agreement with those of the other treatise; but these differences, even the exaltation of Latin as "nobler,"[4] in an apparent contradiction to the argument of the later book, are sufficiently accounted for by the difference of purpose and subject. But the elaborate apology for writing in the vernacular, and the elaborate arguments by which it is supported, have no small critical interest of their own; and the later chapters contain eager championship of Italian, if not against Latin, yet against Provençal, which it was the fashion to compare to it. It is scarcely necessary to go through this book in detail; but it contains some very interesting glimpses, and, as it were, *vistas* of critical truth. The two most noteworthy of these are the remarks about translation, and those about the respective advantages for showing a language of prose and verse.

The Convito.

Translation Dante condemns utterly. Nothing harmonised

[1] § 10. *Remissus est modus et humilis quia loquutio vulgaris in qua et mulierculæ communicant.*

[2] Italian, ed. Moore, p. 235 *sq.* English, Miss Hillard, as above. There is the usual fighting about its date.

[3] L. v. 3, at end.

[4] Ibid., at beginning. The ground of exaltation is that same notion of the greater *stability* of Latin, of its being unlikely to "play the bankrupt with books," which subsisted till the time of Bacon and Hobbes, if not of Johnson, though without the apparent justification it had in the Middle Ages.

by the laws of the Muses can be changed from one tongue to another without destroying all its sweetness and harmony. This (which is arch-true) connects itself directly with Dante's unerring direction towards the criticism of form. If "all depends on the subject," translation can do no harm, for the subject can be maintained in exactly the same condition through more languages than Mezzofanti or Prince Lucien Bonaparte ever meddled with. But the form, the language, the charm of the verse, the music of the composition, *they* go utterly and inevitably; and even if the translator succeeds in putting something in their place, it is another, and not themselves.

Dante on Translation.

Again, in the eloquent and admirable defence[1] of the tongue of *Si* against the *Lingua d'Oco*, he has this remarkable saying, that you cannot see its real excellence in rhymed pieces, for the accidental accompaniments ("accidental," *quoad* language). So do the clothes and jewels of a beautiful woman distract the attention from her real beauty, as much as this is set forth by them. In prose the ease, propriety, and sweetness of the language itself can best be shown. Now, let it be observed that this is no exaltation of prose above poetry as such—Dante was far too good a critic, as well as far too great a poet, to make a blunder which has been made since, though hardly before. His argument is the perfectly sound, and, unless I mistake, almost wholly novel one—that the *intrinsic* powers (if they be doubted) of a language are best shown in prose. If it can do well there, *a fortiori* it can do better in poetry; but the "added sweetness" of rhythm, metre, rhyme, poetic diction, and the like may distract the attention from the mere and sheer merits of the language itself. And so once more we find Dante, in opposition to the Master, in opposition to all ancient critics except Longinus, and partly even to him, recognising the ultimate and real test of literary excellence as lying in the expression, not in the meaning.

On language as shown in prose and verse.

This would in itself be a thing so great that no greater has met or will meet us throughout this history. Even yet the

[1] I. x. 5.

truth, which Longinus caught but as in a Pisgah-sight, which Dante himself rather felt and illustrated throughout than consciously or deliberately championed in any particular place—the truth that the criticism of literature is first of all the criticism of expression as regards the writer, of impression as regards the reader—is far from being universally recognised, is far even from being a prevailing or a popular doctrine. By many it is regarded as an unquestionable heresy, by others as a questionable half-truth. But that Dante did feel, if he hardly saw, it, that he was penetrated by it, that his criticism in the *De Vulgari Eloquio* turns on it—for these things I hope to have shown some cause.

Final remarks on his criticism.

Not of course (it may, though it should not, be necessary to repeat this) that he was himself by any means indifferent to the "subject." On the contrary, the great threefold division of the subjects of high poetry into *Salus*, *Venus*, *Virtus*—Arms, Love, and religiously guided Philosophy—is to this day the best that exists. And here too Dante has made a notable advance on the ancients, in admitting Love to equality in principle, to the primacy (I had almost said), in practice. We saw how the good Servius found it necessary to apologise for the fourth book of the Æneid, as dealing with the trifling subject of Love; we know how Greek criticism slighted Euripides, not, as it might have done, for his literary shortcomings, but because of his reliance on the tender passion; we know further how, except in mystical philosophisings of the Platonic kind, there is nothing satisfactory on the matter anywhere—that not merely Dionysius but Longinus, in the very act of preserving for us the two chief love-poems of the ancient world, can find nothing adequate to say about them, and that Aristotle leaves the subject severely alone.

Here also Dante knew better; here also he expressed consummately all the enormous gain of dream which the sleep of the Dark Ages had poured into the heart and the soul of the world. But here his service, though critical in category, was hardly critical in method; and, besides, he was only one of a myriad. From Brittany to Transylvania, and from Iceland to Provence, the whole thirteenth century, if not the whole twelfth also, had been "full of loves"—there had been no fear of "Venus" being

forgotten. But all these thousand singers had simply sung because they must or would. They had had no critical thought of the manner of their singing. If they had written in Latin, it was because of custom, because they wanted learned appreciation, because they had been taught to write in Latin. If they had written in the vernacular, it was because it came naturally to them, and there was guerdon for it.

But this, as we have seen, was not possible to Dante. Ever a fighter, he was not content to serve the Illustrious Vernacular, to write in it, to advance its powers, without arguing for it as well, without giving it a critical title to place and eminence. Ever a thinker, too, he was not satisfied to write the best poetry, but must know how and in what the best poetry consisted, what made it best, what were its resources and stores of attack and of charm. Most fortunately, his conviction that *vulgare* and *regulare* were two very different things, and that the methods of treating them must be different also, led him, as it would seem, to abandon the devices of the regular Rhetoric, and to construct, half-consciously no doubt, a new and really Higher Rhetoric of the vulgar tongue itself.

This is what we have systematically, if incompletely, for Poetics in the *De Vulgari Eloquio*, while we have hints towards a prose Rhetoric in the first book of the *Banquet*.[1] And it cannot be too much insisted on that, in the former case definitely and systematically, in the latter by sample and suggestion rather than directly, a kind of criticism is disclosed of which we hardly find any trace in the ancients (Longinus partly excepted), though if Aristotle had worked out one side of his own doctrines, and had been less afraid of Art and its pleasure, we might have had it from him.

That the book itself remained so long unknown, and that even after its belated publication it attracted little attention, and has for the most part been misunderstood, or not understood at all, is no doubt in part connected with the fact of its extraordinary precocity. On the very threshold of modern literature, Dante anticipates and follows out methods which

[1] It is not quite trivial that, as in the other case there is the dispute between *Eloquium* and *Eloquentia*, so there is here between *Convito* and *Convivio*.

have not been reached by all, or by many, who have had the advantage of access to the mighty chambers whereof the house has since been built and is still a-building.

We shall see nothing like this in the rest of the present Book. Some useful work on Prosody, a little contribution of the usual Rhetoric, some interesting if indirect critical expression, will meet us. But no, or next to no, such criticism properly so called, no such exploration and exposition of the secrets of the literary craft, no such revelation of the character of the literary bewitchment.[1]

[1] I have not thought it necessary to devote any space to the consideration of the relations of Scholastic Philosophy to Criticism. To search the whole literature of Scholasticism for these would be an enormous labour; and some slight knowledge of the subject (to which I once hoped to devote much of the time and energy actually, but involuntarily, spent on things less worthy and less interesting) leads me to believe that it would be an almost wholly fruitless one. In Dante and in Boccaccio (*v. infra*) we have interesting examples of the bent which scholastic education gave to critics. Lully, or "Lull," as they call him now (though he by no means rhymes to "dull"), shows (*v.* note, p. 371) how criticism afar off might strike a schoolman. But all the men of the schools abode in mere Rhetoric, and even that they mostly despised.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS CHAPTER—THE MATERIAL IT OFFERS—THE FORMAL ARTS OF RHETORIC AND OF POETRY—EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT CRITICISM: CHAUCER—'SIR THOPAS'—FROISSART—RICHARD OF BURY—PETRARCH—BOCCACCIO—HIS WORK ON DANTE—THE 'TRATTATELLO'—THE 'COMENTO'—THE 'DE GENEALOGIA DEORUM'—GAVIN DOUGLAS—FURTHER EXAMPLES UNNECESSARY.

Limitations of this chapter.

THE contents of the two foregoing chapters should have in some sort prepared the reader for the character and limitations of the third. If it were not part of the scheme of this work to leave no period of literary history unnoticed in relation to criticism, a straight stride might almost be taken from the *De Vulgari Eloquio* to the earliest of the momentous and (from some points of view) rather unfortunate attempts which the Italian critics of the Renaissance made to bring about an *eirenicon* between Plato and Aristotle, by sacrificing the whole direct product, and the whole indirect lesson, of the Middle Ages. Between Dante and this group of his compatriots two hundred years later, it is scarcely too much to say that there is not a single critic or criticism, either in Italy or in any other European language, possessing substantive importance. But this book endeavours to be a history, not merely of explicit literary criticism, but of implicit literary taste; and no period—not the dimmest gloom of the Dark Ages nor the most glaring blaze of the *Aufklarung*—is profitless as a subject for inquiry in that respect, even if the result be little more than the old stage-direction—*même jeu.*

In *Arts of Rhetoric*, with or without special or partial reference to Poetry, the two centuries, especially the fifteenth, are indeed fairly prolific. Nothing could be more significant for the subjective side of Critical History than that gradual and at last undisguised identification of "Rhetoric" with "Poetry" itself, which is notorious alike in the hackneyed title of *grands rhétoriqueurs* for the French poets of the fifteenth century, and the continual praise of Chaucer's "rhetoric" by the English and Scottish writers of the same time. The *sacra fames*[1] of the whole two hundred years for Allegory—a hunger which was not in the least checked by the Renaissance, though the sauce of what it glutted itself on was somewhat altered—is another capital fact of the same kind; the renewed passion for changed kinds of Romance another; the ever-increasing interest in drama yet another still. These are the real materials for the student of criticism and taste at this time, and they are identical with the materials, for this period, of the student of literary history generally. In the strictly proper matter of our particular province we not merely may, but had best, confine ourselves to some short notice of the formal writings of the period, and some, rather fuller, of the literary opinions expressed by characteristic exponents of it, whether their claim to represent be derived from eminence, or from merely average, and therefore tell-tale, quality.

The material it offers.

Into the first it will not be necessary to enter at any length. The formal Latin Arts of Rhetoric of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries exhibit nothing new, but observe with a touching fidelity the lines of Martianus, or Aphthonius, or Hermogenes, as the case may be. Moreover, such notice of them as is at all necessary will be better given in the next Book and volume, in connection with their immediate successors of the undoubted Renaissance. The chain of merely formal Rhetoric is unbroken till much later; as it had been little affected by the change from "Classical" to "Mediæval," so it was not sensibly changed till "Renaissance" had definitely given way to "Modern." The vernacular *Arts of Poetry* are, in

The Formal Arts of Rhetoric.

[1] The "cursed appreciation," as a modern wit has translated the phrase in its most famous context.

English of this period, non-existent; and, considering all things, they are heartily to be congratulated on their wisdom and foresight in not existing. In Italy they are of little moment, since Italian poetry had to a great extent taken its line once for all. In French and in German they both exist, and exhibit considerable individual quality. But that quality is emphatically for an age, and not of all time. The growth of the exquisitely graceful but dangerously artificial French poetry of *Ballade* and *Chant Royal*, of *rondeau* and *triolet;* the growth of the artificial, but rarely in the very least graceful, form-torturing of the *meistersingers* were both accompanied and followed, as was natural and indeed inevitable, by abundance of formal directions for executing the fashionable intricacies Some of the more noteworthy of these may be indicated in a note but—as has not always been, and will not always be the case with similar things—they require little or no discussion in the text. For the developments to which they related were not merely a little artificial in the bad sense, but they were also purely episodic and of the nature of curiosities. They had not, as even the most apparently preposterous acrobatics of the Latin rhythmic had, the priceless merit of serving as gymnastic to the new vernaculars—at best they only continued this gymnastic in the case of languages that were "grown up." That they—at least the French division of them—furnished some exquisite moulds, into which the purest poetry could be thrown, is perfectly true. But Jehannot de Lescurel, and Charles d'Orléans, and Villon most of all, could have, and doubtless would have, produced that poetry in any form that happened to be popular at their time. Nay, as has been abundantly shown in France and England during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and a little earlier, the forms themselves will fit any poetry of any time. The ancient names, and the mediæval trimmings, and the modern sentiment of the *Dames du Temps Jadis*, are all equally at home in its consummate but artificial form; and that form is equally suitable to the *Voyage à Cythère* and the aspiration for a grave on the breast of the Windburg. Defect there is none in this accommodating character: rather there is a great quality. But, in the special kind of merit, there is a differentiation

And of Poetry.

from such things as the Greek chorus, the Latin elegiac, the Mediæval rhythmus, the mono-rhymed or single-assonanced *tirade*, the Spenserian, even the eighteenth-century, couplet, which carry their atmosphere and their time inseparably with them. And so we may turn to our testings of writers in whom the criticism "is not so expressed," but who are not the less valuable to us for that.

Examples of Indirect Criticism: Chaucer.

Are we to regret, or not, that Chaucer did not leave us an *Art of Rhetoric* instead of a *Treatise on the Astrolabe*? Probably not. He would hardly have felt what is called in religious slang "freedom" to say what he undoubtedly might have said on Applied Rhetoric and on Pure Rhetoric, though it would have been very agreeable to hear him. He would probably not have told us anything new. In any kind of formal writing he would probably have displayed that not in the least irrational orthodoxy which he displays on most subjects. But there is perhaps no writer—at least no writer of anything approaching his greatness—who, abstaining from deliberate and expressed critical work, has left us such acute and unmistakable critical byplay, such escapes of the critical spirit. If the sly hit at his namesake of Vinsauf, which has been already glanced at,[1] stood alone, it would show us "what a *critic* was in Chaucer lost"—at least to the extent of lying *perdu* for the most part. But this is not the only example of the kind by any means, even in apparent chance-medleys: while in the *Rhyme of Sir Thopas*[2] we have what is almost a criticism in form, and what certainly displays more critical power than ninety-nine out of a hundred criticisms in fact.

That this celebrated and agreeable fantasy-piece is in any sense an onslaught on Romance, as Romance, is so fond a thing that it is sufficient to discredit the imaginations, or the intelligence, of those who entertain it. Dulness never will understand, either that those who are not dull can laugh at what they love, or that it is possible for a man to see faults, and even

[1] *V. supra*, p. 412.

[2] I must apologise to those who hold that Chaucer never rhymed '-*y* and -*ye* for ascribing *Sir Thopas* to him. But I really cannot give it up as Chaucerian.

serious faults, in writers and writings on whom and on which, as wholes, he bestows the heartiest admiration. From the outset of his career the critic has to make up his mind to be charged with "ungenerous," or "grudging," or "not cordial" treatment of those whom he loves with a love that twenty thousand of his accusers could not by clubbing together equal, and understands with an understanding of which—not of course by their own fault but by that of Providence—they are simply incapable.

Of this touch of foolish nature the inference from *Sir Thopas* that Chaucer disliked, or despised, or failed to sympathise with, Romance, is one of the capital instances. To remember that the author of the *Rhyme* was also the author of the *Knight's Tale*, and the *Squire's Tale*, and *Troilus*, that he was the translator of the *Romance of the Rose*, might of itself suffice to keep the wayfaring man straight in this matter; but those who can understand what they read have not the slightest need of such a memory. There have been parodies[1] of Romance which incurred the curse of blasphemy: there is one in particular, not very many years old, which, in the energetic and accurate language of Mr Philip Pirrip, "must excite Loathing in every respectable mind." But *Sir Thopas*, even to those who have not read many of its originals and victims, much more to those who are well acquainted with them, and who rejoice in them exceedingly and unceasingly, can never put on any such complexion. The intense good-humour and the absolutely unruffled play of intelligence, the complete freedom from (what appears for instance capitally in the example just glanced at) political, national, social *animus*, and the almost miraculous fashion in which the caricature strikes at the corruptions, but never at the essential character, of the thing caricatured, settle this once for all.

Sir Thopas.

If we knew (as unluckily we do *not* know) whether the Host and the company stopped *Sir Thopas* because they disliked the type, or because the example was a parody, it would be a great

[1] Not *Rebecca and Rowena*. I think it barely desirable to insert this note because quite recently a person, not demonstrably insane, called that exquisite piece of Romantic humour "distressing," or some such word.

help to us; but it is scarcely a less help to perceive clearly that its critical character would have been enough to put them out of conceit with it. Few people really do like criticism; fewer still like real criticism. And the criticism of *Sir Thopas*, though disguised, is very real. Everybody, whether he knows the metrical romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries or not, can see the joke of the seemly nose; the far country of Flanders; the rebuke to the maidens, who had much better have been sleeping quietly than fussing about the beautiful knight; the calm decision of that knight that an elf-queen — nobody less — must be the object of his affections; the terrible wilderness, where buck and hare ramp and roar, and seek whom they may devour; the extraordinarily heroic exertions, which consist merely in pumping the unhappy steed; the fair bearing, which consists in running away with celerity and success. But nobody who does not know the romances themselves in their weakest examples, such as *Sir Eglamour* or *Torrent of Portugal*, can fully appreciate the manner in which the parody is adjusted to the original. Not the deftest and most disinterested critic of any day could single out, by explicit criticism, the faults "before the Eternal" of the feebler and more cut-and-dried romance, more clearly or more accurately than Chaucer has, by example, in this tale. The stock epithet and phrase; the stock comparison; the catalogue (he had himself indulged pretty freely in the catalogue); the pound of description to an ounce of incident; the mixture of the hackneyed and the ineffective in the incident itself, — all these things this mercilessly candid friend, this maliciously expert practitioner, exposes with the precision of an Aristotle and the zest of a Lucian.

Yet the whole is done by implication and unexpounded example, not in the very least by direct criticism. Had it occurred to him, or pleased him, he could no doubt have censured all these faults in as businesslike and direct a manner as his Parson (or rather his Parson's original) censures the moral, social, and fashionable shortcomings of the age. But he certainly did not do this, and probably he never thought of doing it.

Cross the Channel (though indeed it was not always necessary to do this) and take Chaucer's greatest contemporary among French writing men. It has been said, by that very agreeable biographer of Froissart whom England (mindful of his early loyalty, and characteristically neglectful of his later infidelity) lent to France, that he "was not a man of letters."[1] It may be so: but if it be, he was certainly one of the most literary not-men-of letters that the world has ever seen. Not only is he admittedly one of that world's most charming prose-writers, but it has long been known that the notion of him (if it ever existed among the intelligent) as of a good garrulous old person who wrote as the birds sing, is utterly erroneous. At one time he could make a mosaic of borrowed and original writing—the borrowings often in the very words of the original, the original adjusted to them with an art that nobody but Malory has ever approached, and that even Malory shows rather in general management than in style. At another, and at another again, he could, whether with or against the grain, laboriously recast this mosaic into the most widely different forms. His very desultoriness is calculated; he is criticising the romances by imitation when he makes a *chassé-croisé* to the story of Orthon from the victory of Aljubarrota, from the battle of Otterburn to the evil receipt for a green wound adopted by Geoffrey Tête-Noire, and the remarkably sensible, just. kindly, and gentlemanly remarks of that dying brigand to his fellow-outlaws.

Froissart.

But he is not a man of prose letters only. He is a poet, to the tune of some thirty thousand verses in the long-lost and late-won *Méliador* alone, to the tune of, I suppose, about as many more in his familiar, or at least long accessible, minor poems. He is deft at all the intricate popular forms of the day—at *pastourelles* as at *chansons royaux*, at *virelais* as at *rondelets*. He possesses its learning; and can not only appeal to the common tales of Troy and Thebes and Alexander, not only refer to ancient mythology with the semi-pagan docility which long puzzled students, and seems to puzzle some still, but be even at home with Enclimpostair, and Pynoteus, and

[1] *Froissart.* Par Mary Darmesteter (Paris, 1894), p. 19.

Neptisphelê. In a certain sense he is a man of letters, a man of books, all his life, and very much more than Chaucer is. With all his patronisings by great people and his sojourns among them, he is nothing like the man of affairs that Master Geoffrey was.

And yet, in a sense also, Madame Darmesteter's phrase is intelligible and almost justifiable. It is indeed hardly fair to base this construction on his scanty and not in the least literary reference to Chaucer, whom he does not even, like Eustache Deschamps,[1] call a great translator. In Froissart's happy early English time Chaucer had done probably little work, and certainly none of his best: in that melancholy revisiting, no more of the blaze of the sun of Cressy and Poitiers, but of the glimpses of the moon that was to set in blood at Pontefract, he was probably too old and too disgusted to make inquiries about such matters. But the absence of the strictly literary interest in one who not merely had so much literary genius, but was so constantly reading and writing, is pervading and incessant. This interest is absent not merely where it might well have been present, but where its presence seems almost indispensable. Froissart's style of poetry invites the widest, and (except that it is rather too methodical, not to say mechanical) the wildest, liberty of divagation, of dragging in anything that really interested him. In the most recondite allegorising of the *Prison Amoureuse* he expostulates[2] with Desire for not coming to his aid, and giving him the victory, by the same sort of clever outflanking attack as that which Chandos executed at the Battle of Auray, and of which he kindly gives some details. He names books in the usual manner of Romance; he will go so far as to praise them; but he never discusses them. In the well-known passage[3] of the *Espinette Amoureuse*, when he asks his beloved the name of the romance she is reading, she does

[1] Deschamps, a far more *exclusively* bookish person than Froissart, and one who has even left us, in his elaborate *Art de Dittier*, not the least remarkable of the formal "Poetics" referred to above, is no more of a critic in any true sense than Froissart himself—not nearly so much as Sidonius or Eberhard.

[2] *Œuvres de Froissart* (*Poésies*), par A. Scheler, 3 vols. (Bruxelles, 1870), i. 303.

[3] Ibid., p. 107 *sq.*

indeed tell him that it is *Cléomadès* (Did he mention the same to Chaucer?), with the commendation that it is "well made and dittied amorously," and she asks him to lend her another (it is the *Bailiff of Love*[1] that he hits upon),

"Car lire est un douls mestiers."

But, though the comparing of critical opinions on literature has been not unknown as one of the primrose paths of the garden of Flirtation, they seem to have trodden it no farther.

So in his prose. The *satura* of the *Chroniques* admits anything that interested either Froissart or the men of his time. In those strange midnight sessions of the Italianate Gascon Count of Foix—the lettered tyrant-sorcerer who would have been even more at home in Ferrara or Rimini than in Béarn—books were in great request; but nobody seems to have talked criticism. "So much the better for the Bearnese," the reader may say; and he is welcome to an opinion which, at times, if not always, most people must have shared. But that is not the question. The question is, "Was this a critical age?" and the answer is, "If it had been, a man could not have been so bookish as Froissart was and yet be not critical in the least." Nor could he, even if some private idiosyncrasy had accounted for his own attitude, have failed to reveal the presence of a different one in the time which he has drawn for us, more poetically no doubt than Boswell or Pepys, but with not a little of their unpremeditated, their even unconscious, fidelity.

Richard of Bury.

The lesson taught by the two men, who occupy the summits of European literature at the very midmost of the period of this chapter, will be confirmed whether we look earlier or later. It might seem almost impossible that the somewhat famous *Philobiblon*[2] of Richard of Bury (or Aunger-

[1] *Cléomadès* (which is possibly not unconnected with Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*) whose will may know and (if he be of my mind) rejoice in (ed. Van Hasselt, Bruxelles, 1865). But, alas! we have not the *Bailiff of Love*.

[2] Often printed: the best edition of the original Latin is, I believe, that (with French version) of M. Cocheris (Paris, 1856). The late Professor H. Morley gave one of the wide biographical excursus of his *English Writers* (iv. 38-58) to Bishop Richard, and included in it a pretty full abstract of the *Philobiblon* (or "Philobiblion").

vyle), who made one of the greatest collections of books in the early part of the fourteenth century, and celebrated it in this little tract just before his own death and shortly after Chaucer's probable birth, should not contribute something—improbable that it should not contribute very much—to our subject. As a matter of fact it contributes nothing at all. Almost the oldest Sacred Book (as distinguished from "sacred passages" in Cicero and others) of Bibliophily, it remains entirely outside of literary criticism. The good Bishop of Durham, indeed, does not devour all books with indiscriminating voracity. He is true to his order in candidly avowing no high opinion of law-books; but his reason—that they belong rather to Will than to Wit—shows us his point of view. From that point of view one book may be preferable to another, as being more useful, as dealing with a nobler subject, as boasting a more venerable authorship, as being perhaps rarer, more beautifully written or bound, older, newer, in better condition, but not, I think, at all as being better literature. The pleasant garrulity of the tractate; its agreeable onslaught upon woman, the natural enemy of books; its anecdotage; its keen sympathy with the Book as almost a living thing, and certainly one exposed to almost all the dangers of life, have made it, and will long make it, a favourite. It is sweet and pleasant: but it is not criticism.

Petrarch.

The author of the *Philobiblon* was a friend of Petrarch's, and it may at first sight seem strange that Petrarch himself should not be—should not indeed have been at the very beginning of this chapter—summoned to give evidence likewise. But the fact is that Petrarch has nothing to tell us in our context. He has indeed, as has been pretty universally recognised, nothing to do with the Middle Ages. Not only in his heart and desires, but in his nature, he is a man of the early—if of the earliest—Renaissance. Even in the vernacular he rings false as an exponent of anything mediæval. Timotheus, not St Cecily, has taught his strains. And in his "regular" writing he is severely, almost ludicrously, a classicaster. We may return to him as the earliest distinguished example of the Renaissance attitude; here he cannot even, as others have done, help us by his silence.

It is otherwise with his great contemporary, and at the last friend, Boccaccio. Boccaccio likewise has been claimed as a prophet of the Renaissance, as one of the first of the moderns and the like; nor would it skill to deny that there is much both of the Renaissance and of the modern spirit in him. But he has not broken with the immediate past; he is only tinging it, and blending it a little, with the farther past and the future. If something of the magical charm of the mediæval prose story is gone from the *Decameron*, the learned voluptuousness of the Renaissance *conte* is not yet there The *Filostrato*, and the *Filocopo*,[1] and the *Teseide*, are still romances. And in the *De Genealogia Deorum*, if there is much of that non-mediæval spirit which was always in Italy, and not a little of the Renaissance proper, there is enough of the Middle Age itself to give it a *locus standi* here.

Boccaccio.

Indeed, by a recent authority of great eminence[2] Boccaccio has been treated as a coryphæus and representative of "the critics of the middle ages." I have endeavoured, in these chapters, to show that the critics of the middle ages are, except in the most remote and shadowy function, almost a non-existent body. And it seems to me that Boccaccio's views on criticism, though most worthy of remark, are the very head and front of that Renaissance side of him which is so undeniable. In the passage which Mr Courthope cites from the *Life of Dante*, where Boccaccio says that Theology and poetry are almost one, that "Theology is God's poetry," that it is a kind of poetic invention when Christ is spoken of at one time as a lion, at the other as a lamb, that the words of the Saviour in the Gospel are merely or mainly allegory, that "Poetry is Theology and Theology poetry," and that Aristotle said nearly as much[3]—when he writes in this way he is speaking very much less the mind of the Middle Ages than the mind which agitated the mass of his countrymen, the Italian critics, from

His work on Dante.

[1] Without prejudice to *Filocolo*. We attempt not to decide such quarrels.

[2] My friend, Mr W. J. Courthope, in the third chapter of his *Life of Pope* (Pope's *Works*, ed. Elwin and Courthope, v. 50: London, 1889.)

[3] Had he known Maximus Tyrius (*v. supra*, p. 117), he might almost have borrowed the very words of that writer. But in the astonishingly long list of Boccaccio's classical authorities Maximus does not, I think, occur.

Daniello onwards in the sixteenth century. But it is quite certain that in writing this he is writing with a conception of criticism quite alien from that which we are now handling. He may quote Aristotle, but he is speaking in the manner of Plato. It is poetry in the abstract with which he is dealing, not the literary value of poetry according to its expression in form, of no matter what ideal in essence. And it will be found, I think, that a careful study of his commentary on Dante, the most important thing of the kind that we possess by one considerable man of letters in the Middle Ages upon another, entirely bears this out.

As for the *Life* (or, as he himself seems to call it in the first lecture of the *Commentary*, the "Little Treatise"[1]) on Dante, it is couched in so extremely rhetorical a style, with constant bursts of apostrophe and *epiphonema*, that there may seem to be a sort of warning on it from the first: "Criticism not to be expected." As a matter of fact, however, Boccaccio does give us some of what, as we shall see more fully in a moment, he thought to be criticism, and of what not a few persons seem still to think the best criticism. For he has an elaborate digression on Poetry and Poets in the abstract, with a particular parallel distinction (referred to above) between poetry and theology. But he goes no farther, and the heading "Qualità e diffetti di Dante" is entirely occupied with moral characteristics. In the *Comento* itself, however, it might well seem to be a case of Now or Never. Here was a literary lectureship expressly instituted for the treatment of the greatest man of letters of the city, the country, and (as it happened) the world, at the time and for long before and after. Here was an exceedingly learned lecturer, with plenty of mother-wit to keep his learning alive, with a distinct fellow-feeling of creation further to animate both, and with the sincerest and heartiest goodwill to complete his competence. He spares no trouble, but goes to his work with scholastic minuteness, expending some three score lectures and some nine hundred pages on seventeen cantos only out of the hundred of the *Commedia*.

The Trattatello.

[1] *Trattatello.* I use the cheap and convenient ed. of the two books published by Le Monnier. (Florence, 1863; latest ed. 1895, 2 vols.)

Unfortunately neither his models nor his tastes seem to incline him in the way where we would so fain see him go. He has read Servius and all (or at least many of) the rhetoricians and scholastic philosophers, and he tells us with gusto what are the causes, formal, efficient, material, and final, of the book, how its form is "poetic, fictive, descriptive, digressive, and transitive," and how the efficient cause is "that very same author Dante Alighieri, of whom we will speak more extensively by-and-by." He has also read Fulgentius:[1] and before very long he gives us a capital specimen of derivation, in the manner of that ingenious author, by telling us that "Avernus" is from *a*, which is without, and *vernus*, which is joy. He has at his command all that extraordinary supply of mythological and miscellaneous classical learning which, as we shall see immediately, enabled him to write his *Genealogy:* and he never comes to the name of an ancient writer or of a mythological personage without giving a full and particular account thereof. No details are too obvious or too minute for him, even apart from the allegorical interpretation, in which, as any scholar of Fabius Planciades, and indeed any mediæval writer of the fourteenth century, was bound to do, he expatiates delightedly. He vouches the information that Dante called the forest *selvaggia* "because he wished to denote that there was not in it any human habitation, and that as a consequence it was horrible;" *aspera*, "in order to demonstrate the quality of the trees and shrubs of the same, which would be old, with long straggling branches enwoven and interpleached among themselves, and likewise full of blackthorns, and brambles, and dry stubs, growing without any order, and stretching hither and thither—whereby it was a rough thing and a dangerous to go through," &c. He is copious in moral *excursus* on the impropriety of Florentine dress, on the sin of Luxury, on the obvious inconvenience and hardship of the fact that while men are allowed to try horses, asses, oxen, dogs, clothing, casks, pitchers before they buy them, they have to take their wives on trust and without trial. But on literary criticism we come not seldom, but never, beyond the beggarly elements of verbal interpretation, where

The Comento.

[1] He quotes him early, ed. cit., i. 94 (see note opposite).

Boccaccio is just as happy with *Pape Satan* as with *Galeotto fu il libro*, or rather more so, while he is much happier with Penthesilea or Pasiphae than with either. It is no doubt unfair to try Master John Bochas with the things that make us "nearly wild" (as Cowper made Miss Marianne Dashwood,[1] and does *not* often make us), but still the Galeotto passage is very tempting. Lancelot, we learn, was one of whom the French romances tell many beautiful and laudable things (things which he tells us, in confidence, he himself believes to be set forth rather to please than according to the truth), and the said Lancelot was *ferventissimamente* enamoured of Guinevere. Then he points out that the line which follows (*Soli eravamo*, &c.), and the previous mention of the book, indicate three things —reading about love, solitude, and freedom from suspicion— which are very powerful to induce a man and a woman to adoperate dishonestly. And so he proceeds, expounding or construing the whole ineffable passage, word for word, with a solemn and indiscriminate enjoyment—the trembling at the kiss, the fact that Galehault was a kind of giant, great and big, down to *Quel giorno*, his remark on which, though not scientifically inaccurate, savours rather of the *Decameron* than of the *Commedia* itself. But in the whole comment there is nothing (or, what is worse than nothing, a single banal *ottimamente descrive*) for any part whatsoever of the passion, the poetry, the mysterious magnificence of the expression. The passage is to Boccaccio a good *ecphrasis*, a capital *compte rendu* of an interesting situation—that is all.

The *De Genealogia Deorum.*

Nor will this be less borne out by an examination of Boccaccio's principal "place" of criticism, which will be, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, found in the two last books, the fourteenth and fifteenth, of that singular monument of learning, the *De Genealogia Deorum*.[2] After labori-

[1] "To hear those beautiful lines, which have frequently almost driven me wild, pronounced with such impenetrable calmness, such dreadful indifference!"

". . . but you *would* give him Cowper."

"Nay, mamma, if he is not to be animated by Cowper!" — *Sense and Sensibility*, chap. iii.

[2] There is said, to the discredit of modernity, to be no modern edition of this most remarkable and interesting book. Of the three folio issues (1494 and later) which are in the library of the University of Edinburgh, I have used that of Hervagius (Basle, 1532.)

ously searching out all the mythological stories of antiquity within his reach, and co-ordinating them into a regular family history, from Demogorgon, through Erebus and his twenty-one sons and daughters, by Night, to Alexander and Scipio (whom, however, he declines, as a strict genealogist, to admit as sons of Jove), Boccaccio, at the beginning of his fourteenth book, takes up the cudgels for Poetry against her enemies. The style is decidedly rhetorical, and faint remembrances of Clodius as an accuser (or, to be less pedantic and less hackneyed, of Steenie lecturing on the turpitude of incontinence) may possibly occur, as we find the author of the *Decameron* indignantly denouncing those who sneer at poets and learned men, *meretriculis gannientes*, and holding cups of foaming wine in their hands. But he is perfectly serious: if a man has not proved his seriousness by writing a Latin genealogy of the gods in four hundred large and closely printed folio pages, what is Proof? There was always, he says, a quarrel between Learning and Licentiousness. Even some graver folk sneer at, or find fault with, poetry. Lawyers do so: and the lawyers are properly rebuked and bid to look at the example of Cicero. Monks do: and there is expostulation likewise with them. But he will attack the question in form. Poetry is a noble and useful thing. Its meaning, its antiquity, its origin are discussed. There is nothing wrong or harmful in a "fable" as such; but in all its kinds it can be made of positive utility. Poets do not retire into solitude out of any misanthropy or wrong motive, but simply for the sake of meditation: and they have often been the friends of most respectable people—Ennius of the Scipios, Virgil of Augustus, Dante of King Frederick and Can de la Scala, Francis Petrarch of the Emperor Charles, of King John of France, of King Robert of Jerusalem and Sicily, and of any number of Popes.

But, some say, poetry is obscure. It is certainly written for the learned and people of wit, not for the common herd; but it is none the worse for that. It is entirely false that poets are liars: poetry and lying are two quite different things (Virgil is here particularly cleared in the matter of Dido). It is foolish to condemn what you do not understand: and this is generally done by those who abuse poetry. And it is intolerable that

men should speak against Homer, Hesiod, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, when they have hardly read them. The "seduction" of Poetry is all nonsense: and the accusation that poetry is the ape of philosophy, greater nonsense still. It would be better to call poets the apes of Nature.[1]

He does not fear to contest the authority of Jerome when he said that verses were *Dæmonum cibus*, of Plato himself, and of Boethius when he called the Muses "scenic meretricules." He grapples with the two first at great length, and points out that Boethius was thinking chiefly of the naughty theatre. An allocution to the King (Hugh of Cyprus and Jerusalem), to whom the whole treatise is dedicated, and a milder deprecation to the enemies of poetry, conclude this book.

The Fifteenth at first seems to launch out into still deeper waters. You must not insist too much on *use*. What is the use of the beard? Yet men of a certain age are ashamed to be beardless. And as for the duration of work, that is in the hand of God. But this turns to a mere excuse of his own actual book. His work has been done as well as he can do it, both for matter and for style. He refers to divers living or recent authors, Dante and Petrarch among them, of whom he gives little descriptions that raise, but hardly satisfy, our curiosity to see whether he will really criticise. Dante was *peritissimus circa poeticam*, and what he was is shown by his *inclytum opus*, "which he wrote with wonderful art, under the title of a Comedy, in rhyme of the Florentine idiom, and in which he certainly showed himself not a mythologer but rather a catholic and divine Theologian. And while he is known to almost all the world, I know not whether the fame of his name has come to your latitude." Petrarch is dealt with much more fully. "Even that remote corner of the earth England knows him as a principal poet,"[2] and here Boccaccio no longer *nescit utrum*, but *haud dubitat quin*, his fame has reached Cyprus. His "divine" *Africa*, his Bucolics, his Epistles in verse and prose, and a good many other things, are noticed.

[1] Mr Courthope must, I should think, have overlooked this passage when he (denied *loc. cit.*) that Boccaccio and other mediæval writers held the doctrine that poetry should follow Nature.

[2] By favour of one Geoffrey Chaucer!

Next he recurs to antiquity, mentioning Homer especially, and defending his own practice of mixing Greek words with Latin by the examples of Cicero, Macrobius, Apuleius, and Ausonius. He has a good deal to say (entirely in a Renaissance spirit) on the importance of the Greeks and of Greek; defends, against clerical prejudice, his description of the heathen poets as the theologians of mythology, argues once more that Dante may be called a theologian proper, contends at great length that there is no harm in the study of heathen matters by Christians, and, after purging himself of other objections, concludes.

A most interesting document; indeed a document upon which, with reference both to its general tenor and to individual expressions (of which it has been possible to mention but one or two here), it would be pleasant to spend much more time. But a document which, for our present purpose and plan, seems to establish in the main two things, both of them rather negative than positive. The first is that Boccaccio can hardly be appealed to either as helping Dantes Aligerus to remove the reproach from mediæval criticism, in the sense in which we here understand it, or even as a representative proper of mediæval criticism at all—that his criticism, such as it is, is of a purely Renaissance type, and results, not from the application of mediæval ideas to ancient matter, but from the application of resuscitated ancient ideas to matter which, though not wholly, is preferably chosen from ancient material. It is not to be forgotten that even in that creative work which has been referred to above, Boccaccio has always preferred the *matière de Rome*, the classical side of the mediæval storehouse. From this he has drawn the *Teseide*, from this the *Filostrato*, and if in the *Filocopo* he has made a more purely mediæval choice, let it be remembered that *Floire et Blanchefleur*, his original, is of all Romances the most like a Byzantine novel, and has even been thought to have been directly inspired by one.

Secondly, when we examine the character of this criticism of his in detail, we find it differing from Dante's in this, that while Dante undoubtedly does consider the general and abstract points of poetry and of literature, Boccaccio practically con-

siders nothing else. His descriptions of Dante himself and of Petrarch would suffice to prove this: but, in fact, it is proved by every page, every paragraph, every sentence, almost every word. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth books of the *Genealogy* Boccaccio is really pleading *pro domo sua*—for the *status* and craft of the story-teller generally, not of the poet as such. And further, he is pleading for free trade in the story, not for any special process of art or craft in its manufacture. He had possibly, if not certainly, read the *De Vulgari*, but, as he read it, it must have been in the first part of the first book only that he found much that was germane to his own tastes and principles. If we could but have had from himself such an *examen* of the *Decameron* as Corneille and, still more, Dryden have given of their work! But the time simply did not admit of any such thing: and though Boccaccio was very much in advance of his time in some ways, these ways were not of the some.

Nor does the Fifteenth Century proper necessitate any revision of the general doctrine of this chapter. There are here and there blind stirrings of the Renaissance spirit; but, once more, they do not concern us. There is everywhere the dogged or unconscious adherence to the uncritical promiscuousness of the past; and that has been sufficiently commented upon. If it be, as perhaps it is, desirable to take a single example, and deal with it as we have dealt with others, there can hardly be a better than Gavin Douglas, who at the very end of the period shows, side by side with Renaissance tendency (which certainly exists, though to me it does not seem so great as it has seemed to some), the strongest symptoms of persistent mediævalism.

Gavin Douglas.

Nobody can deny that the good Bishop of Dunkeld (uneasiest to him of bishop-stools!) not only would have liked to be a critic, but shows both his critical and his Renaissance sides in the well-known and violent onslaught on poor Caxton in the first of the very agreeable Prologues to his own translation of the *Æneid*. In fact, those to whom the woman who killed Abimelech with a stone or slate is the patron saint of criticism, must regard him as a very

considerable critic. How Caxton's work and Virgil's are "no more like than the Devil and Saint Austin"; how the author "shamefully perverted" the story; how the critic read it "with harms at his heart" that such a book "without sentence or engine" should be entitled after so divine a bard; how such a wight never knew three words of what Virgil meant; how he, Gavin, is "constrained to flyte,"—all this is extremely familiar. We seem to hear the very voice of the modern "jacket-duster," of the man who finds his pet task anticipated, his pet subject trespassed upon, and is determined to make the varlet pay for it. Douglas, to be sure, is not quite in the worst case of this class of critic. He can render some reasons, neither garbled nor forged, for his censure. He has (and this is a sign that criticism was stirring) lost taste for, lost even comprehension of, the full. guileless, innocent, mediæval licence of suppression, suggestion, and digression. He protests (quite truly) that Neptune did not join with Æolus in causing the storm that endangered Æneas, but on the contrary stilled that storm. He is indignant at the extension given to the true romantic part of the poem, the Tragedy of Carthage in the Fourth Book, and only less indignant at the suppression of the "lusty games" and plays palustral in the Fifth. Most of all does he tell us of that aggravation of the critical misuse of allegory which was to be one of the main Renaissance notes. The "hidden meaning" of poetry is the great thing for Douglas, and he has much to say about it before he "turns again" on Caxton. Will it be believed that Caxton wrote "Touyr for Tiber"! Alas! alas!

> "For Touyr divides Greece from Hungarie,
> And Tiber is chief fluide of Italy."

But all this, and a great deal more like it, as the setting up of the old Rhetoric-Poetic theory of a poem as the story of a perfectly noble character, and the rebuke even to Chaucer not merely for being too literal, just as Caxton was too loose, but for actually saying (the more Chaucer he!) that Æneas was *not* a perfectly noble character but a forsworn traitor,—all this argues no real relinquishment of the mediæval ideal except

in a special case. Douglas shows in his own work that he is after all a chip of the old block, and not fresh hewn from a virgin quarry.

In the Prologue to the Sixth Book he returns to the allegorical-philosophical interpretation of Virgil, and shows himself a hundred leagues to leeward of the critical port by urging, in Virgil's favour, that St Augustine is always quoting him against Paganism. Not in the whole range of mediæval literature is that pell-mell cataloguing, which, with more truth than reverence, has been assimilated to that of the "Groves of Blarney," better shown than in the *Palice of Honour*. Solomon, "the well of sapience," Aristotle, "fulfillit of prudence," "Salust, Seneca, and Titus Livius" jostle Pythagoras and Porphyry, Parmenides and "Melysses," "Sidrach, Secundus, and Solenius," "Empedocles, *Neptanabus*, and Hermes," "wise Josephus and facund Cicero," with other miraculous couples and trinities. The procession of the Court of Venus huddles classical, Biblical, and mediæval in the same, but a more pardonable, fashion; and when the Muses intervene to save the peccant poet, Dictys and Dares still march unblushingly with Homer and Virgil. "Plautus, Poggius, and Persius" must have looked only less oddly, the first and last at the second, than "Esop, Cato, and Allane" (Alanus de Insulis of the *Anti-Claudianus* and the *De planctu Naturæ*) each at other. Such a capital phrase as "the mixt and subtle Martial," the valuable naming of contemporary poets that follows, and other things, may much more than atone for, but cannot hide, the higgledy-piggledy character of the cataloguing, or the odd repetition of the same thing with a difference at the end of the Second Part, and the yet further development in the Third. The note of criticism is discrimination —the note of the Middle Age, as of this, almost its latest exponent, save in the few places where he has chipped his shell, is the indiscriminate.

Further examples unnecessary.

It can scarcely be necessary, though it might not be uninteresting, to take any more examples. We need not wander in Hercynian forests with those rules of latest Middle High German poetry, which have all the formality of the French "Arts" and none of the charm of their

products. The Marquis of Santillana and his comrades, in castle or convent of Spain, concern national rather than general history, history of literature rather than history of criticism; and they, like others, will best be glanced at retrospectively in the Renaissance section. From the French *rhétoriqueur* period we might pick out much that would illustrate, over and over again, what has been sufficiently illustrated already, little that would give us anything new, nothing or next to nothing that would be at once new and important.[1] As will be shown, a little more in detail, in the Interchapter which follows, the service which the Middle Ages rendered to Criticism was indeed inestimable; but it was by way of provision of fresh material, not by way of examination, either of that material or of anything older.

[1] Considerations of something the same kind may partly excuse a further omission — which I know will be deplored by some, and which I daresay will be denounced by others—that of any notice of rhetorical and metrical writings in the Celtic and Scandinavian languages. I shall very frankly acknowledge that there is another reason for this omission. I have the greatest dislike to writing about anything at second-hand; and while I have as yet had time to acquire only a slight knowledge of Icelandic, I do not know anything at all of the Celtic languages. With the help of Fors Fortuna, I may be yet able to make these defects in some measure good; but I do not think it necessary to delay the present volume indefinitely in order to do so. "There is no staying," as Johnson says, "for the concurrence of all conveniences. We will do as well as we can." So far as I have been able to inform myself, the rhetorical writing of Icelandic is not extensive or important, even though some may have come from the interesting hand of Snorri Sturluson. The early Irish metrical treatises are, no doubt, of great importance for the history of metre. But being purely particularist, and out of the general current of European literature, their critical importance can hardly be regarded as of the highest kind. And Welsh, while anything of the sort in it must be much later, is necessarily in the same position.

INTERCHAPTER III.

§ I. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MEDIÆVAL PERIOD TO LITERARY CRITICISM.

§ II. THE POSITION, ACTUAL AND POSSIBLE, OF LITERARY CRITICISM AT THE RENAISSANCE.

I.

In perhaps no part of a work of the present kind is it more important than it is here to distinguish between the different kinds of value, for the special purpose, of the period in question. If you judge this by its positive contributions to the standard literature of literary criticism, it has absolutely nothing of consequence to advance but the *De Vulgari Eloquio*. There is not very much else at all; and what there is consists mainly of agreeable babblings, of schoolbooks, and of incidental utterances, which at best can be taken as a kind of *semeiotic*.

Yet, in the *De Vulgari* itself, the Middle Ages lodged such a diploma-piece as has been scarcely half-a-dozen times elsewhere seen in the history of the world. And, what is still more important, their contributions to productive literature were such that they take, from the catholic point of view, equal rank as a whole with those of classical and those of modern times, while, for the special critical purpose, they are almost more valuable than either. Enforced and necessary ignorance of what the Middle Ages had to teach accounts in almost every case for whatever shortcomings we find in the Classics; wilful or careless ignoring of this accounts for most of the shortcomings of the moderns; recourse to it accounts for most of the merits, such as they are, of the criticism of the nineteenth century

The critic who knows his Middle Ages, knowing also ancient and modern literature, and he alone, has the keys of the criticism of the world.

Of the excellent and astonishing accomplishment of the *De Vulgari Eloquio* enough has been said already, and it will not require extensive surveys to show the small accomplishment in criticism of the Middle Ages elsewhere. It is almost enough to consider, as we have done, the work of Chaucer, their next man to Dante in genius[1] as a known personality. Chaucer had all or almost all the necessary qualifications of a critic—a real knowledge of literature, a distinctly satirical humour, a large tolerance, a touch, decided but not too frequent, of enthusiasm, an interest in a very wide range of different subjects and forms. And he is actually a critic in embryo, and more, throughout his work. The *Boethius* and the *Astrolabe*, the *Rose* and the *Troilus*, half the *Canterbury Tales*, more than half the minor works, are saturated with literature—could have come from no author but one who was saturated with literature. There is uncrystallised criticism on every page; there is even some crystallised criticism in the *Sir Thopas*, and perhaps elsewhere. But almost always "it is not so expressed," and for once Shylock is justified of his refusal to find it. In Chaucer, the strange mediæval levelling of authors, not merely in respect of trustworthiness, but in respect of positive value, continues. Macrobius is as Cicero; Dares is much more than Homer. If he gives an opinion, it is a moral one. He puts the rejection of alliteration on a mere local ground; and they will not even let us believe that he laughed at French of Stratford-atte-Bowe from any literary point of view.

Yet while the persistent study of Rhetoric is of great importance, as exhibiting the keeping up of a critical treatment—such as it is—of literature, the growth of the vernacular Poetics is of much more, as developing a side of formal criticism which was

[1] If, as is still possible, and most probably can never be disproved, Walter Map fashioned the perfect Arthur stories, by dint of combining the Lancelot-Guinevere romance and the Graal Legend, composed the *De Nugis*, and wrote an appreciable quantity of the Goliardic poems, he will run Chaucer hard in all but the claims impossible to his time. But the "if" is a great if.

destined to become of more and more importance as time went on, and to have a connection with, and an influence upon, criticism not merely formal, to which there is no parallel in ancient times. So far as we have any trustworthy evidence, Greek prosody was born like Pallas—full-grown and fully armed. It has no known period of infancy or pupilage: the poets may devise—may even give their names to—ingenious combinations, but all these combinations obey one prearranged system. If the case of Latin is not quite the same, the periods where it is most significantly different happen to be periods when criticism had either not come into being or had abdicated its functions. A *De Prosodia Latina* by Nævius must have been as interesting as Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction*, and might have been as interesting as the *De Vulgari Eloquio*. A treatise on *Latin Rhythms* by Prudentius might, in its different way, have had an interest which is difficult to parallel by anything modern in actual existence.

The Middle Ages, however, were constrained to grapple with their problem as it arose. They had, as we have seen, been constant to *Artes Poeticæ* dealing with Latin: at last they had begun to face the more difficult question, how to construct and regulate their own growing vernacular prosody. No doubt, in these latter attempts, the mechanical prescriptions of the Provençal and French *Arts* appear more frequently than the philosophical-scientific consideration of poetical capacities visible in the *De Vulgari;* but there is no reasonable fault to find with this. Nor can it be reasonably contested that the extreme variety, licence, and (if any one likes the word) irregularity of the greater modern prosodies have given wider range to individual poetical development than was allowed by the prosodies of the ancients. Here, as elsewhere, uniformity rather than variety was probably the aim, and is certainly the achievement, of the Classics. For one individual and all but inimitable thing, like the Æschylean modulation of the chorus (so different from the grave but less throbbing music of Sophocles, and from the Euripidean tune) or like the Lucretian Hexameter, we find a dozen resemblances; and, with elaborate combinations like the Alcaic or Sapphic, the result is, as in the parallel case of

our Spenserian, or the Jonson-Herbert-*In Memoriam* quatrain with enclosed rhyme, mainly uniform. But the greater or less licence of equivalent substitution in the staple English lines—the octosyllable and decasyllable, for instance—admits of the impression of a singular personal stamp, and, unless rejected by the mistake of the individual or the moment, has rarely failed to produce it.

Still one returns, and must necessarily return, to the admission that, to justify the claims here put forward as to the critical importance of the Middle Ages, one cannot go to their own explicit and deliberate exercises in criticism. To apply Johnson's not quite inspired remark on Fielding and Richardson, they neither did, nor in all probability could, explain the mechanism of the timepiece. But they told the time of day with unerring accuracy; and their records of it have been neglected, and will be neglected by succeeding ages, only at the peril—which has already sometimes led to actual shipwreck—of miscalculating the whole literary reckoning. When the critics of the Renaissance, followed more or less blindly by those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, either contumeliously or in the sheer generous mistake of desire for improvement, turned their backs, as far as they could, on the products of Mediæval literature, they not merely shut themselves out from a vast volume of delight, they not only mistook disastrously the value of many individuals, but they recklessly deprived themselves once more—and with far less excuse and greater loss than had resulted from the similar refusal of the later Greeks—of an inestimable opportunity for Comparison. And so they once more barred for themselves the one gate and highway to really universal criticism of literature.

For the great, the immense, value of the literature of the Middle Ages consists in its freshness and independence, and the consequent fashion in which new literary bents and faculties of the human mind were manifested. The Greeks had, at any rate so far as we know, neither the advantage nor the disadvantage of any precedent literature before them; but their spirit of theory and of philosophising, while it helped to concentrate and intensify the peculiar virtue of their product,

tended also to narrow and stereotype their range. Latin suffered from the double drawback of system and model. And modern literature itself has not, with all its achievements, been able to free itself from the inevitable consequences of ancestry. It is a great deal too literary; it has, in almost all cases, the obsession of the library, and the printed book, upon it. It is deliberate, preoccupied, interested; it has all sorts of cants, prejudices of education or emancipation, purposes, reminiscences, unacknowledged and often unconscious trammels and twitches. Its fountains are very rarely of living water; they are fed from carefully constructed and collected reservoirs, if not by positive distillation from the great sea of older literature.

Now, with all their slavish docility, all their writing in schools and groups and batches, all their adoption of tags and texts, the Middle Ages and their literature present a spectacle which is exactly the reverse of this. The authors have the appearance of following; they are really straying, each at the dictation of his own tastes and instincts only. You may as well try to teach a cat to do anything in any but her own way as a mediæval writer. When he copies a Romance, he will change the names if he does nothing else: but probably he will do much else, writing it in sixains if his model is in couplets, in decasyllables if his original is octosyllabic, and so forth. Nothing shall induce him to keep historical distinctions or philosophical differences. His hero[1] shall be as beautiful as "Paris of Troy, *or* Absalom, *or* Partenopex"; his story of Alexander shall blend sober history and the wildest fiction, with a coolness which is only not reckless because it does not see anything to reck. Formal restrictions of the minor kind, prosodic and other, he will observe devoutly, because they come naturally to him and are of his own devising; but any restrictions of literary theory he utterly ignores. His Muse will wear no stays, though she does not disdain ornaments.

The reward of this obedience to Nature was signal. In the first place the Middle Ages created, or practically created, the STORY. Of course there were stories before; of course the *Odyssey* would be the best story in the world if, of the main ele-

[1] As is actually the case with Floire or Florice, the lover of Blanchefleur.

ments of Romance—Passion and Mystery—one were a little more developed; and is almost the best story in the world as it is. Of course there are capital *fabliaux* in Herodotus, fine apologues in Plato, good things of other kinds elsewhere. But the ancients not only hampered themselves by almost always telling their longer stories in verse, but seldom knew how to manage them in verse or prose. The *Iliad* is such a bad story that it has tempted the profanity of those who would make it not one but a dozen stories; the *Æneid* is a story, dull *à dormir debout* as such, with some good rambling and fighting, a great descent to Hades, a capital boxing-match, not a bad regatta, and a famous but borrowed episode of passion. Out of Herodotus, till we come to the very verge of the classical period with Apuleius and Lucian, it is almost impossible to find a Greek, quite impossible to find a Roman, who knows how to tell a story at all. The exquisite substance of mythology receives no due honour from the story-teller as such. Read Ovid (who had as much of the story-telling spirit in him as any ancient except Herodotus), and then turn to what is often the mere doggerel and jargon of the mediæval Latin story-tellers in prose and verse. The gift, no matter whether it came from the East or from the West, from the North or from the South, from the Heaven above or the earth beneath, or rose a new Aphrodite from the Atlantic sea, is here and is not there.

Without this gift of story-telling there could not have appeared—though it would not by itself have been enough to produce—the greater gift of the Romance. It would be as unnecessary as it would be foolish to enter here into the secular and truceless war as to the origin, the nature, and so forth of this famous thing. It is sufficient to observe, once more, that the thing is here and is not there, except almost by accident. And the gift of the Romance—in that wide historical sense in which it could be, and was, in the Middle Ages applied to almost every manner of subject—was a gift to literature so inestimable that perhaps no other has ever quite equalled it. At once, with that nonchalance (they called it *nonchaloir*) in which no time has ever equalled these Ages, they swept away the

Doctrine of the Subject, with all the cants and heresies which pullulate round its undoubtedly noble articles of original faith. Romance was perfectly prepared to deal with any subject, from religion to stag-hunting, from chronology to love. It depended no doubt on the individual craftsman whether the result was good or bad; but the method has, in the right hands, triumphed over the most intractable materials, added charm to the most commonplace, made the most grotesque acceptable. Could anything be thinner and more ordinary than the subject of *Floire et Blanchefleur*? Can anything be more charming, not merely than its most perfect outcome in *Aucassin et Nicolette*, but even than the diffuser and less happily phrased verse-forms? In the Arthurian Legend the success is greater still. Romance takes a dim personality, and a handful of cacophonous place-names, out of a suspicious compilation of pseudo-history, and spins it, in a single lifetime, into a story the most elaborate, the most artful, the most variedly interesting, the fullest of meaning (if men *must* have meaning) in the whole literary world.

Even to Dante it did not occur to subject the methods and the results of this new and potent kind to such an examination as that which Aristotle had partly given to the older literature. Nor, at that time and in those circumstances, was even Dante likely to have led such an inquiry to a good end. The Middle Ages, while consciously abandoning, almost or altogether, the old aim at Action, had not arrived at the modern command of Character. They worked at and by mediate things—Incident, Atmosphere, Description, Manners, Passion — and they made all these and others subserve a Romantic Unity of plot which, instead of being circular like the Classical Unity, was calculated for indefinite prolongation, not merely in straight line, but after the manner of a tree, with branches and inarchings skyward, earthward, and horizontal. The scheme admitted adornments of various kinds, which must have been difficult if not impossible to reconcile with the more sober and exacting classical model. It permitted a much greater indulgence of the resort to the methods of other arts, especially painting, than classical literature had, until its latest days, thought proper. It paid very little atten-

tion to mere probability. All these points invited the comparative critic, but they did not find him. In three respects, however, the difference between classical and mediæval Imitation or Representation was almost more striking than in any other, and all of these presented the most tempting opportunities for criticism. These were the attitude of the new literature to Religion, its attitude to the passion of Love, and its use of an implement which, though by no means unknown to Classical literature, had been more sparingly used therein, the method of Allegory.

On the first point it would be very easy to enlarge beyond the widest toleration of this treatise; it is here only necessary to point out how delicate, and how important, are the new duties prescribed to the critic of mediæval literature in regard to it. The "blinded Papist" view (which makes itself felt even in some observations of such a man as Scott now and then) may not be so common as it once was, but it is not entirely obsolete. And it may be doubted whether that to which it has given place—a philosophical pity, contemptuous or sympathising, for "superstition" generally—is not even more hampering, while there can be no doubt of the hamper imposed on the yet earlier Renaissance by the superior contempt which it felt for mediæval childishness and ignorance. In this literature, and in the romantic branch of it more particularly, allowance has to be made at every moment, in every respect and condition, for the omnipresence of an elaborate creed which nobody doubted, with which everybody indeed was so saturated and familiar that he could jest with it and at it, as one jests with and at a best-beloved and best-known person and friend. It supplies subject, it affects treatment, it colours phrase and image. Although it is very easy to underrate the amount of actual religious feeling in antiquity, yet this feeling, at its noblest and sincerest, was unquestionably of an entirely different character from that of the "Ages of Faith." Take, at their best and strongest, the sincere fetichism of the ancient equivalent of the "charcoal-burner," the beautiful mythology of the poet, the sublime mysticism of the Platonist, and the exalted if slightly Pharisaical morality of the better Stoic—combine

them with all the art of the student of development. But you will not succeed in making anything in the least like the creed of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with Christ, or rather with the Virgin and the Devil, fighting perpetually for Mansoul, with Angels and Deadly Sins under their command, with a miracle possible at every moment, Death and Fortune ruling affairs subject to, but not always interfered with by, the higher influences, the Sacraments to be resorted to at will or neglected at peril, Purgatory to be faced or anticipated and won through, Hell or Heaven for final goal. It is almost impossible to allow too much in degree (though it is extremely possible to allow wrongly in kind) for the influence which this ever-present set of thoughts, beliefs, feelings, which was absent from antiquity and present in the Middle Ages, had upon the literary utterance of the latter. The unnatural gloom and the half-inarticulate gaiety which have been discovered in this literature (the latter at least as truly as the former), its occasional irrationality, as we are pleased to call it (perhaps "irrationalism" would be a better word), its shuddering attraction for the horrible and loathsome, its delight in dream, its quaint and almost flighty revulsions and contrasts—all are due to this.

Equally a commonplace, and yet still more important to, and still more neglected by, criticism, is the attitude of the Middle Ages to Love—which is very mainly conditioned by their attitude to Religion. The not infrequent, though very idle, debate as to whether the Venus of chivalry was Urania or Pandemos is, of course, best avoided by the frank acknowledgment that she was (as indeed Her Divinity always has been) both. The distinction from antiquity, and its influence upon literature, do not lie in the least in this direction, or in the fact of the mixture, but in its nature and character. With exceptions, of course, the tone of antiquity in literature, as to love and to its objects, is either the tone of slightly unreal philosophising, or the tone of the naughty story, or that of half-paraded, half-confessing contempt. The two former require no treatment here; the latter is important. Love and its objects are, to an average serious man of letters of the Classics when not a subject for conventional escapades, a rather regret-

table incident attached to humanity, something not in the least *spoudaion*, something only not among the *parerga* of life because it is almost impossible to avoid them, something useful, not unpleasant, rather better than a constitutional or a bath, but affording a much less worthy employment than talking in a porch, or declaiming in a school. This is undeniably the average attitude of the average man of letters of old. That of his mediæval brother need hardly be described; but its causes come within our view. You have to reckon, not merely with the cult of the Virgin, as has often been done, but with the whole Christian (especally mediæval-Christian) theory of morals and of sin. Why excite yourself about actions indifferent at best, always rather below the attention of a serious man, and at worst leading to unpleasant and dubious consequences? Excitement becomes easy when the consequence of a moment's guilty indulgence may be the Inferno for eternity. Nay, from a less purely selfish point of view there are reasons enough. Imagination—the real Imagination of Apollonius or Philostratus, not the mere image-furnishing faculty of the ancients generally—had "come to town," and brought a transformed Love with her. The sense of mystery, of miracle, of the invisible, grafted itself upon the strongest of the merely physical instincts, and the result pervaded literature. The trumpery subject, proper for comedy, for epic episodes, for a carefully kept-under seasoning to tragedy, for light trifles, became, with Religion, the subject of nearly all poetry, and of not a little prose, and made its influence felt in all manner of ways. It even, although the Middle Age was confessedly not strong in character, paved the way to that last grace, thanks to the fancy of the time for rehandling the same subjects and persons. Trace Briseis-Briseida, a fashion-plate in Dares, a slave-girl in Benoist, to the Cressida of Chaucer and of Henryson; trace Guanhumara, a handsome Roman damsel of good family and nothing more, down to the complex woman and Queen of the complete *Lancelot*, and you will see how character-drawing arose.

But undoubtedly one of the greatest, and perhaps the most characteristic, of the influences of the love-motive on literature, and the development of literary methods through

this and other motives, is the mediæval use of Allegory. The thing, of course, is not new—nothing ever is in the strict sense. It may actually have dwelt upon the banks of Nile: it certainly did on those of Ilissus and Tiber. But the very strong prominence of it in the Scriptures, and in ecclesiastical writings generally, could not fail to develop it in the younger vernaculars; and its alliance (a dangerous one no doubt, but a real and natural) with Imagination could not long be missed. Many ingenious and industrious hands have traced its origin from Homer to Claudian, and from Claudian to the *Romance of the Rose*. How it thence coloured all literature is sufficiently known. But no critic has even yet exhausted, nor are a hundred critics likely to exhaust, the subtle and innumerable ramifications of its literary influence and manifestations.

These things and others showed themselves no doubt mainly in the Romance—the chief, the most characteristic, and, so far as anything is original, the most original of the literary products of the Middle Ages. But the Romance was far indeed from being the only new development in literary morphology that the period had to offer. Until nearly its closing time, no great change or advance was made in History, though the artificial speech, which ancient exaggerations of oratory had imposed on the historian, was to a great extent dropped, and the purview of the writer was insensibly widened in other directions. But the immense cultivation of the short tale—first in verse, then in prose—was a matter closely connected, but by no means identical, with the progress of Romance itself. And, as in another matter glanced at above, the restless character of the time, and its constant tendency to reproduce with slight alteration, had, here also, a great influence. In all these alterations the arts and crafts of the future novelist and dramatist were insensibly exercising themselves. But the drama itself demands at least a glance. That the modern play owes nothing to the mediæval is the foolishest of critical delusions; but it would hardly be rash to say that the mediæval drama owes nothing to the ancient. When the horror with which (for not such very bad reasons) the Church regarded stage plays altogether had been a little relaxed, the natural and the artificial

dramas followed entirely different lines. Hroswitha's work, and *Christus Patiens*, and the rest, have absolutely nothing to do with Miracle or Mystery or Farce, which are the romance and the short story thrown, according to the natural histrionic bent of man, into presentation by personages instead of by continuous narration. And the laws which they developed, and by which they helped the greater and more genuine modern drama to be what it was, were natural likewise, and had nothing to do with Aristotle or with Horace, with Plato or with Aristophanes.

This would by itself have sufficed to give the new drama a very different nature, and therefore a most important comparative critical influence, when contrasted with the old. The Greek drama (which the Roman more or less slavishly copied) may have had its infancies; but we possess it only in its riper age. Nor is it even possible that these infancies, granting their existence, could have shown anything like the multiform influences which betray themselves in the mediæval drama. Both may have been originally liturgic; but there is such an infinite difference in the complexity of the liturgies! Both may have been preceded by epic and perhaps lyric; but in other respects the Greek drama was certainly among the first—as the mediæval drama was nearly the last—to take rank among literary kinds. And these differences, putting others aside, would have accounted, in great part, for the singularly undulating and diverse character which (in company, no doubt, with an imperfection as great as the diversity) distinguished the new drama from the splendid, but somewhat narrow, perfection of the old. Even in the stock types, in the Vices and Fools of the new form, there was little or nothing of the fixed character of the Roman—we can say little of the Greek—"comedy of art."

And so, not merely in more kinds of literature than one, but in every kind of literature, with hardly a single exception, the Middle Ages provided their successors with the material for an entirely new Calculus of Critical Variations—for a complete redressing of whatever positive errors or mere relative gaps had existed in the older criticism, by reason of the absence of opportunities for observation.

II.

Nor can it be regarded as any great drawback to the critical position of the Renaissance to which we are coming—and the grounds and data of which it is desirable to survey in advance, by way of retrospect over the contents of the present volume—that this immense provision of new critical material was not accompanied by many, or indeed (with the one great exception, soon to be known, but to be hardly in the least heeded) any, accomplished exercises in critical method. For these, as has been pointed out, were not likely to have been very good; and, good or bad, they were nearly sure to have been neglected, or to have done positive harm by way of mere reaction. Moreover, it was easily and perfectly open to the Renaissance to create for itself in this department. By its recovery—no longer in half-measure, and less than half-light, but in full—of the literature of antiquity, it had been put in possession, not merely of the other great masses of literary material, but of quite admirable examples of critical method itself. Quintilian, Horace, Cicero, the Greek and Latin Rhetoricians, were among its inherited possessions, and it had certainly had the *Poetics*, though little attention had for a long time been paid to them. But they were soon put before it afresh: and, what is more, the discovery of Longinus also was soon made. Horace, with his arbitrary rules, and his enforced, but probably not at all unwelcome, abstinence from any dry exhibition of material and examples, was no doubt, with all his merits, a very dangerous mentor. But with Aristotle, Quintilian, and Longinus at hand as preceptors of method, and practically all then existing literature, classical and mediæval, at hand as storehouse of matter, a man of the mid-sixteenth century had only himself to blame if he did not hit upon at least the main and general articles of the critical Catholic Faith. He might not anticipate the magnificent and almost unbelievable new developments of literature which were actually to take place, in the three western countries of Europe, within a very few years; but he would have been none the worse critic for

that. The critic is, by his profession, not in the least bound to be a prophet. But he had every document necessary to correct the chief shortcomings of the ancients, to enlarge the classification of literary kinds, to rearrange the nature, degrees, and methods of the literary assault on the senses and the soul.

It would be undue anticipation to discuss what he did instead of this; or to give in detail the positive influences which worked upon him in preferring his actual alternatives. But it is matter of undoubted history that he did not do what he might have done, and it is matter of relevance here to give the reasons, as far as they are retrospective, why he did not do it.

To a considerable extent the explanation, and if not the justification, the excuse, of his failure lie in a well-known and constantly repeated phenomenon which, on this particular occasion, showed itself with unusual, indeed with elsewhere unexampled, distinctness and power. Every age and every individual (it has been said often, but can never be said too often), unless it or he is a mere continuation of predecessors, is unjust to these predecessors. Examples are not necessary; the merest moment's thought will supply them in profusion. But there were numerous and powerful conditions and forces which made this injustice certain to be more violent and more lasting here than in almost any other case. No known "dispensation" exists historically of anything like the same length, the same intensity, the same uniformity as that which characterises in all things, and certainly not least in matters literary, the thousand years of the Middle Age at its widest stretch. And this would of itself be sufficient to bring about a reaction of corresponding violence and duration. But to this general aspect of the whole period must be added the particular aspect of its final stage. Except in Italy (which had never been intensely or characteristically mediæval, and which had practically ceased to be so, in any sense not external, soon after Dante's time) the fifteenth century had been a period of decadence, or of transition, or of stagnation, in almost every European country. It is possible, though it is not probable, that minds in which the critical spirit was reawakening might have taken a juster view of things if the fresh examples then before them, to be compared with Homer,

Lucretius, Thucydides, had been Dante, Chaucer, Froissart. But there was some excuse for an indignant pooh-poohing of the mere possibility of comparison, when the persons, to be compared immediately with the great writers of antiquity, were the dreary and bombastic *rhétoriqueurs* of the French, or the shambling versifiers of the English, fifteenth century.

The Renaissance, moreover, was likely to be led wrong by that constant delusion of matter, that fatal attraction towards the subject, which, as this *History* endeavours to show, has led Criticism wrong a dozen times for once that it has led her right. The mediæval forms of literature were identified, allied, in fact saturated, with certain beliefs and modes of thought—scholastic philosophy, Catholic religion, aristocratic politics. To the pure Platonist on the one hand and the thorough-going Aristotelian on the other, to the reformer on the one hand and the freethinker on the other, to the democrat on the one hand and the believer in Machiavellian statecraft on the other, all these things were partly horrible, partly idiotic, altogether to be shaken off and refused. The natural, but in the main irrational and frivolous, weariness of an old fashion was supplemented, inspirited, made far more vehement and dangerous, by the deliberate and reasoned, if not reasonable, antipathy to, and revolt against, an old faith. It has been acknowledged already that the *Morte d'Arthur* would have fared as badly with Augustine as it did with Ascham; but the moral provocation would not have been aggravated to Augustine, as it was perhaps to Ascham, certainly to more thorough-going Protestants than he, by the distinct connection between the Graal Legend and the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Accordingly, the Renaissance indulged itself, and left to its successors, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (different as they were from itself in many ways), an amount of "unintelligent scorn" of the past which, if it does credit to nothing else, does credit at least to the vigour and intensity of the time. Sometimes this scorn was vocal and argumentative, as in Ascham himself, in Du Bellay, in others. More often, and with a subtler mischief still, it was silent, implicit, apparently exchanged for mere negligence. The childish things were simply put away,

despatched to the lumber-room, and left there. And it was this negligence, rather than the scorn, which did harm to the criticism of the periods that followed. It does not do the critic unmitigated harm to take the wrong side now and then; he exercises himself at his weapons, he can acquire dexterity in them, and very often (Dryden is a notable example) he teaches himself orthodoxy in the very act of fighting for the heterodox. But when he allows himself to ignore, great gulfs or smaller pits open for him at once. That is what he can never afford to do; that is the cause of all the errors which have beset his kind, from the beginning of critical things until the present day. One of the most excellent and admirable of librarians once replied to a childish question of the present writer, "What do you do with the rubbish?" "It is rather difficult, you see, to know what is rubbish to-day; and quite impossible to know what will be rubbish to-morrow." And while this is more especially true of the critic, who can with safety pass nothing, at least unexamined, as rubbish, his case is more dangerous still than that of the librarian, who has but to arrange what he has got in orderly fashion, and prepare plentiful shelves for what is coming.

With the critic, as we have seen, it is different. He must always generalise at his peril, and subject to the upset of his generalisations by fresh discoveries. But he can at least be careful of the "without prejudice," and he can at least neglect nothing that is within his reach, in his processes of observation and comparison. The earlier Greek critics erred, as we have seen, partly because of a necessary and guiltless deprivation. But their venial sin became more of a mortal one, when they not only assumed that there was nothing save what they knew in Greek, but deliberately ignored the opportunities, not of sovereign but of considerable efficacy, which were offered them by Latin. The Latin critics erred, partly by the same assumption, and partly by converting the despite of Latin into a slavish and unintelligent adoration of Greek, and not always the best Greek. The Middle Age was innocent, as hardly indulging in criticism at all. But the Renaissance critics at first committed, and to far too great an extent handed on, a combination of the sins of their classical teachers. They assumed the

stationary state of literary kinds and qualities, as both Greeks and Romans had done; they adulated classical literature, like the Romans in regard to Greek; they despised mediæval literature, like the Greeks in relation to Latin. And, as we shall see, they had their reward.

But I should be sorry to end not merely a chapter but a Book, not merely a Book but a volume, without a *caveat* against possible misconstruction of the words "fault," "error," "sin,' "mischief," "misfortune," and the like, which have just been used, not merely in this context, but throughout the volume itself. There have been, I believe, persons unfortunate enough to be dissatisfied with the moral and physical government of the universe—persons who have sadly pronounced it "a crank machine" in many ways. These things are not my trade. But, in matters literary, I must plead guilty to being something of an optimist. Not that I think all literature good—that is not precisely the conclusion to which a thirty years' practice of criticism brings one. In the critical land, as in the *pays des amours*, the shore where one always loves is a shore of which it must be said that *on ne la connaît guère*. There is, indeed, a certain critical delight in reading even the worst books, so long as they are positively and not merely negatively bad—but that is another matter.

The point on which I am contented to be called a critical Pangloss is this, that I have hardly the slightest desire to alter —if I could do so by the greatest of all miracles, that of retroactive change—the literary course of the world. No doubt things might have been better still—one may there agree with the pious divine on his strawberry. But one may also be perfectly contented with the actual result. I have endeavoured to show that, however we may feel bound to pronounce Greek literature incomplete in this or that department, and still more Greek criticism imperfect in its assumptions and of questionable adequacy in its methods, yet Greek criticism was the criticism which was wanted, to register and to preserve the qualities which have made Greek literature perhaps the most indispensable possession among the now goodly list of the literatures of the world. I have endeavoured further to show that the two con-

flicting strains or streams in Latin criticism correspond, in a manner "necessary and voluptuous and right," on the one hand, to the ordered correctness and *venustas* which are the notes of the Latin spirit on its Academic side; on the other, to the undercurrent of half-barbaric gorgeousness which there, as elsewhere, now and again asserted itself — with no small benefit to the world's letters.

And so, also, in this chapter and the Book which precedes it, I have tried to show that the immense provision of new kinds of literature by the Middle Age, side by side with its almost total abstinence from criticism, was the best thing that could have happened. Nor is it impossible that, if we are able to pursue the inquiry, we shall find that the new differentia of the Renaissance period and that which followed to the Romantic revival—the curious fact that almost all its criticism went one way, while almost all its best creation went dead in the teeth of that criticism—has again worked mainly if not wholly for good. But this is for the future. *Si laisse ore à tant li contes à parler!*

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